VALVE®

PRESENTS

THE SACRIFICE

AND OTHER STEAM-POWERED STORIES

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THE SACRIFICE

AND OTHER STEAM-POWERED STORIES

64 PAGES OF GORILLA STABBING

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SAXTON HALE'S JUNGLE BRAWL

"I CUT MY WAY OUT OF PRIMATE HELL!"

AN APE WILL DIE ON EVERY PAGE!

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PRESENTS

THE SACRIFICE

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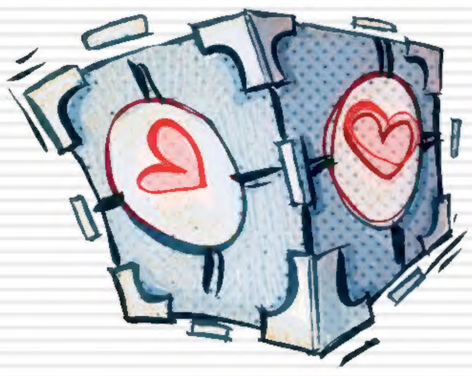

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VALVE PRESENTS Vol. 1: The Sacrifice and Other Steam-Powered Stories

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INTRODUCTION

BY SAXTON HALE, YOU LUCKY DOG

When Valve first asked me to write the foreword to this picture book, I told them they should get a child to write it, since only children would be reading it. In fact, I told them, why not skip it altogether? In my experience, children have tiny brains and, let's be honest, would buy a plate of their own excrement if you painted it bright red. It's called "going past the sale."

Then they told me they expected adults to buy this nonsense, and I smelled profit. Why? Adults have more money than children.

So to you I say welcome, low-functioning adult. I apologize that this page doesn't have any pictures in it. If it helps, **I CAN TALK IN ALL CAPS AND USE SMALL WORDS. YOU WILL LIKE THIS BOOK. IT HAS A LOT OF COLORS. GIVE ME YOUR MONEY.**

There. On the off chance that you're reading this and not a simpleton, I apologize. Possibly you're in a pediatrician's office, leafing through this while you wait for your child. Or maybe you've read all the other books in the world and this is what you're down to. If that's the case, I absolve you of the responsibility of reading this one. I certainly didn't. I did glance through it, though, so if you're curious what the gist of it is, some real men, including me, did a lot of adventurous, heroic things. Then some arty-fart sad sacks drew pictures of it.

And now you've bought it. Congratulations. Considering the other things you would have been tricked into buying—magic beans, ghost repellent, an art degree—I can honestly say this is the wisest purchasing decision you've ever made.

You have enjoyed reading this.

Saxton Hale
CEO, MANN CO.
AUSTRALIAN

LEFT 4 DEAD

THE SACRIFICE

THE SACRIFICE

PART ONE

ZOEY.

LOUIS.

FRANCIS.

YOU'RE SAFE.

ALL I EVER WANTED WAS FOR YOU TO BE SAFE.

I'D SACRIFICE *ANOTHER* HUNDRED PEOPLE TO *KEEP* YOU SAFE.

I'D SACRIFICE *MYSELF*.

'COURSE...

THAT DON'T MEAN I'LL GO DOWN *EASY*.

TK-CHAK

AH, HELL...

THREE OF 'EM.

THREE GODDAMN TANKS.

HEH.

MAYBE I'LL HAVE A SMOKE FIRST.

HOLD YER HORSES...

...I'LL BE WITH YA IN A MINUTE.

MY JOB'S DONE.

KAFF

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU *GOT*, YOU *BIG DUMB SONS OF BITCHES.*

ONE WEEK AGO.

HA *HAHH!* TIME TA PLAY *FETCH*, YA FRIGGIN' DUMBASSES!

THROWIN' A PIPE!

TICK

TICK

TICK

TICK

WHMP

GOD DAMN IT.

EVACUATION OUTPOST ECHO, UPSTATE PENNSYLVANIA.

NICE ONE, FRANCIS.

MAYBE THROW THE BOMB *OUT* THE WINDOW NEXT TIME.

ZOEY, YOU MIGHT NOT WATCH A LOT OF BASEBALL...

BUT IT AIN'T GOOD FOR A MAN'S PITCHIN' ARM WHEN A ZOMBIE'S *HANGIN' OFF IT BY ITS GODDAMN TEETH.*

DAMN IT! NOW THEY'RE ALL COMING UP *HERE!*

YEAH, I *KNOW*, LOUIS.

TELL YA WHAT, NEXT TIME I'LL THROW IT UP YOUR *ASS*. THEN YOU CAN JUST CLENCH AND--

TICK

TICK

TICK

TICK

TICK

AKH!

PFFH!

...HATE... ZOMBIES... SO MUCH...

TKTKTKTKTKTKTKTK

BOOOOOOM

WELL, IT'S ABOUT @#*%ING TIME...

GUYS! RESCUE'S HERE!

ARMY'S *HERE*, GUYS! LET'S GET MOVING!

I'M COMIN', I'M COMIN'!

C'MERE, UGLY...

BLAM

SERIOUSLY, GUYS, LET'S MOVE!

WHERE'S BILL?

FRANCIS, *WHERE IS HE?*

IS HE *OKAY?*

BY THE STAIRS.

I LOOK LIKE A STAIRCASE TO YOU? HOW THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW?

WHITE-HAIRED OLD MUMMY? SMOKES A LOT, HATES STAIRS?

OH, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE...

GUARD THE ROOM! WE'LL LEAVE THROUGH THE HOLE.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

THINK WE SHOULD GO WITH HER, MAN?

MAYBE BILL'S IN TROUBLE.

TWO THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT BILL THESE LAST TWO WEEKS...

DON'T MAKE FUN OF HIS OLD GUY GOAT BEARD...

HE'S BEEN IN ONE OF HIS VIETNAMMY MOODS ALL NIGHT.

BILL? NAH.

"...AND NEVER INTERRUPT HIM WHEN HE'S *WORKIN'*."

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK

NNNYAGHH!

HNGH!

KRKK

CHKK

BILL? RESCUE'S HERE!

BILL?

BILL! WE'VE GOT TO GET UPSTAIRS, MAN! RESCUE'S HERE!

I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME, KID.

I JUST WASN'T *FINISHED.*

HEH.

I DON'T SUPPOSE THERE'S ANY WAY WE COULD LEAVE WITHOUT--

NO, FRANCIS KNOWS IT'S HERE.

AHHHH, ALRIGHT.

FRANCIS, WHEN YOU GONNA STOP PUNCHING THAT THING IN THE HEAD, MAN?

DUNNO. SOON AS IT GETS BORING.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

NOPE.

STILL FUN.

LET'S *MOVE!*

I LEAVE YOU LADIES FOR FIVE GODDAMN MINUTES AND YOU FORGET HOW TO RUN TO A RESCUE VEHICLE!

ZOEY, YOU TAKE POINT. I'LL COVER THE...

THOOM

AH, FER CHRISSAKES...

THOOM

TANK!

BILL!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, KID!

FALL BACK TO THE ROOF!

THOOM

THOOM

THOOM

I SWEAR TO GOD I MUSTA KILLED *FIFTY* OF YOU SONS OF BITCHES BY NOW...

YOU'D THINK *ONE* OF YOU'D HAVE THE COMMON GODDAMN COURTESY TO GO DOWN *EASY.*

SKSSH

THROWIN' PROPANE!

GOT IT!

BOOOOOM

BLAMBLAMBLAMBLAMBLAM

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

ALRIGHT.

NOW CAN WE ALL GET THE *HELL* OUT OF THIS FARMHOUSE?

MOVE! MOVE!

FRANCIS, HURRY!

HOLD ON. I GOTTA GIVE THIS ZOMBIE THE FINGER.

SHLKT

FRANCIS!

AGGHH! SHIT!

I GOT YOU!

DON'T LET GO, DAMMIT!

I AIN'T LETTIN' GO, MAN!

I TAKE BACK *ALLA* THAT NASTY CRAP I SAID ABOUT YA !

HOLD ON. YOU BEEN SAYIN' NASTY CRAP ABOUT ME?

DON'T LET GO DON'T LET GO DAMMIT DON'T LET GO!

DON'T WORRY, LOUIS! I'M ON IT!

ALLLMOST...

BLAM

GOTCHA, FREAKSHOW.

SLAM

OH HELL, *YES*, THAT IS HOW THAT'S *DONE!*

NO MORE FAT PUKING ZOMBIES, NO MORE BIG-ASS CAR-CHUCKIN' ZOMBIES...

NO MORE CREEPY SNOW WHITE CRYIN' BITCHES...

JUST A WHOLE MESS A' REST AND RELAXATION IN THE SAFE ZONE, BABY! HA-*HAHHH!*

CALM DOWN. I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.

WHAT THE HELL KINDA ATTITUDE IS *THAT*, MAN?

FRANCIS, WE'RE IN AN *ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER.*

DRIVEN BY THE *MILITARY.* BEING TAKEN TO A *SAFE ZONE.*

CAN I *FINALLY* GET YOU TO ADMIT EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE JUST FINE?

LOUIS, I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO BREAK THIS TO YA, BUT WE BEEN HEADING TO THE SAFE ZONE FOUR ***TIMES NOW.***

HELICOPTER: ***CRASHED.***

PLANE: ***CRASHED.***

BOAT: KICKED US OUT AND ***LEFT US TO DIE.***

TRUST ME...

SOMETHING'LL GO WRONG AND WE'LL ALL BE DEAD.

ROCK, THIS IS RESCUE 9.

WE'VE RECOVERED FOUR TANGO MIKES. PLEASE ADVISE.

RESCUE 9, BYPASS ECHO AND RETURN TO MILLHAVEN.

ROCK, COPY THAT.

HELLO?

HEY, UH... MAN, I JUST WANNA *THANK* YOU FOR SAVIN' ALL OUR ASSES BACK THERE.

WE HEADIN' TO THE SAFE Z--

TAK

SEE?

WHAT'D I TELL YA?

WE'RE FRIGGIN' DOOMED.

NICE, FRANCIS. THAT'S A REAL POSITIVE ATTITUDE.

OH, COME ON. YA CAN'T *REALLY* BE AS FRIGGIN' OBLIVIOUS AS YOU LET ON, CAN YA?

WELL, MAYBE I'D RATHER FOCUS ON STAYING *ALIVE,* INSTEAD OF ALWAYS COMPLAINING HOW WE'RE *ABOUT TO DIE!*

GUYS...

WE *ARE* ALWAYS ABOUT TO DIE.

EXACTLY, FRANCIS! AND WE'RE *STILL ALIVE!*

SURE. AND WE'RE *STILL ALL ABOUT TO DIE.*

FACE FACTS, MAN-- WE'RE LIVIN' THROUGH A *ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE.* THAT'S A SHIT SANDWICH NO MATTER *HOW* YA CHEW IT.

NOTHIN'S GETTIN' BETTER. EVERYTHING'S GETTIN' *WORSE, ALL THE TIME.*

JUST ONCE I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOU ADMIT IT...

NOTHIN'S GONNA BE OKAY EVER AGAIN.

"RAY, HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YOU?"

"EVERYTHING IS GONNA BE *JUST FINE,* MAN."

SO PLEASE. DO *NOT* TELL ME YOU ARE CALLING IN SICK.

YEAH, *NO*, LOU. I'M CALLING IN *WELL*. AND I'M PLANNING TO STAY THAT WAY.

FOR GOD'S SAKE, RAY...

LOU, LOOK, NO OFFENSE. NORMALLY I LOVE YOUR "GLASS HALF FULL" ATTITUDE. IT'S GOT US THROUGH SOME ROUGH TIMES, ALRIGHT?

RAY.

BUT THIS TIME, I SWEAR TO GOD, THE GLASS IS *DEFINITELY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT HALF-EMPTY.* AND THE OTHER HALF IS... I DUNNO, FULL OF PISS.

COME INTO WORK, RAY.

PHILADELPHIA. 2 DAYS AFTER FIRST INFECTION.

NO! LOUIS. PEOPLE ARE *DYING*. I'M NOT GONNA GET INFECTED JUST TO KEEP FRANKLIN BROTHERS' BULLSHIT DATABASE RUNNING!

RAY, YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET INFECTED. THERE'S BARELY ANYONE HERE!

THERE'S MORE INFECTED PEOPLE IN YOUR CONDO.

WHATEVER. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW, BUT IT'S THE END OF THE GODDAMN WORLD OUT THERE.

OKAY. OKAY. BUT—THOUGHT EXERCISE, ALRIGHT? WHAT IF IT'S NOT?

WHAT?

WHAT IF THIS GREEN FLU BURNS ITSELF OUT IN A WEEK?

WHAT IF EVERYBODY GOT ALL EXCITED FOR NOTHIN', AND THE ONLY TWO GUYS WHO STAYED CALM AND KEPT THIS PLACE *RUNNING* WAS YOU AND ME!

YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE GONNA *GET* FOR THAT?

INFECTED.

COME INTO WORK, RAY.

TRUST ME. I GOT A *GOOD* FEELING ABOUT THIS.

LAZY SON OF A...

S'UP, MAN.

AHHHH...

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

OH, GOD *DAMN* IT.

HOW CAN THAT SERVER BE *DOWN* AGAIN?

I JUST *FIXED* THAT MOTHERF--

THMP

OCCUPIED, MAN.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

THMP

HEY. *OCCUPADO.* THIS STALL IS *OCCUPIED.*

CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES

THERE IS SOMEONE IN THIS STALL ALREADY.

THMP THMP THMP THMP

OKAY, *WHAT THE HELL?* COULD YOU LET A MAN TAKE A SHIT IN PEACE?

I WILL BE DONE IN A MINUTE.

JUST WAIT...

...YOUR...

UH... YOU OKAY, MAN?

...HWuGGGHHHH...

OH, SHIT...

OH, SHIT!

OH, SHIT!

NFF!

DON'T...

RRRAGGGHHHHHHH!

GET YOUR GODDAMN HANDS OFF ME!

CRACK

CRNCH

WHND

KRND

SPLK

HUHH

HUHH

HUHH

HUHH

HUHH

HUHH

RINNNNNNNNNNNNNG!

RINNNNNNNNNNNNNG!

RINNNNNNN

NNNNNG!

RINNNNNNNNNNNNNG!

CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES

CDA

HI! YOU'VE REACHED LOUIS IN I.T.!

I'M NOT AT MY DESK RIGHT NOW, BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW, EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE *JUST* FINE.

LEAVE YOUR NAME, EXTENSION, AND THE NATURE OF YOUR PC EMERGENCY AFTER THE BEEP...

"...AND I PROMISE, I'LL GET LIFE BACK TO NORMAL FOR YOU REAL SOON."

RESCUE-9, WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?

HAVEN, WE HAVE FOUR TANGO MIKES FOR THE DOC. THIS IS CAPTAIN MORA. IS THE MAJOR THERE?

RESCUE-9, NEGATIVE.

HAVEN, PLEASE ADVISE THE MAJOR I NEED TO DEBRIEF HIM *DIRECTLY.*

RESCUE-9, COPY THAT. YOU KNOW HE'S GONNA ASK, WHAT'D YOU SEE?

HAVEN, YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT.

I *SAW* IT AND I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

CREEEEEAK

PUT YOUR WEAPONS ON THE FLOOR OF THE VEHICLE. *NOW.*

HOLLLD ON. I KNOW HOW THIS GOES.

YOU'RE GONNA *CAVITY SEARCH* US, AIN'T YA?

PUT YOUR WEAPONS DOWN.

THIS IS YOUR *LAST* WARNING.

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT...

HEY, YOU SHOULD CAVITY SEARCH *BILL*. HE LOOKS PRETTY SUSPICIOUS.

FRANCIS...

WAIT, I GOT IT. MAYBE YOU THREE WANNA CAVITY SEARCH EACH *OTHER*.

KRNNK

OW.

WHMP

BRING YOUR SMART ASS FRIEND.

ANYBODY MAKES A BREAK FOR IT, THAT BODY GETS SHOT.

WELCOME TO MILLHAVEN.

UM. HI. I'M NOT A SMART ASS.

GOOD TO HEAR, MA'AM.

WHERE ARE WE? I THOUGHT WE WERE BEING TAKEN TO ECHO SAFE ZONE.

NEGATIVE, MA'AM.

RIGHT. CAN YOU AT LEAST TELL US *WHERE* YOU'RE TAKING US?

TESTING.

OH-*KAY*. AND IF WE *PASS* THE TEST?

ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW WHAT, NEVERMIND.

I THINK I GET THE IDEA.

THE SACRIFICE

PART TWO

MILLHAVEN. 2 DAYS AGO.

...AND WHEN THAT *HAPPENS*, SERGEANT DOWNEY...

--IF THAT HAPPENS--

I'LL WANT TO KNOW WHO I CAN *TRUST.*

YOU UNDERSTAND ME, SON?

YES SIR, LT. MORA.

I'M NOT SAYING IT *WILL*, MIND.

I'M JUST LOOKING AT THE FACTS.

WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM COMMAND IN *SIX DAYS.*

THAT IS A FACT.

WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM ANY SURVIVORS IN TEN.

AND *THAT* IS A FACT.

EVEN THOSE BLEEDING HEARTS AT CEDA STOPPED CALLING TO LECTURE US ON HOW TO TREAT THE PRISONERS.

NOT THAT I AM COMPLAINING ABOUT *THAT.*

YOU THINK COMMAND'S ABANDONED US, SIR.

NO I DO NOT.

WHAT I *THINK*, SERGEANT, IS IF COMMAND *COULD* HAVE CALLED, THEY *WOULD* HAVE CALLED.

I THINK IT IS SAFE TO ASSUME WE ARE *ON OUR OWN.*

AND I THINK EVERLY IS OUT OF HIS *GODDAMN MIND* KEEPING US HERE.

ONE BAD GAS MASK.

THAT IS *ALL* IT WILL TAKE TO PUT US IN THE GROUND.

FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, CAPTAIN, WE OUGHTA PUT 'EM ON THE *FRONT LINES.*

LET *THEM* FIGHT THESE FREAKS.

LET THEM *GO*, IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

ARM THEM. SO THEY CAN ESCAPE. KILL *MORE* INNOCENT PEOPLE.

THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO ME.

THIS OUTPOST CAN NO LONGER *AFFORD* TO TREAT THESE PRISONERS AS FELLOW CITIZENS.

THEIR VERY EXISTENCE IS AN *ACT OF AGGRESSION.*

WE ARE AT *WAR* FOR THE CONTINUED GODDAMN SURVIVAL OF THE HUMAN RACE. AND THEY ARE ON THE WRONG *SIDE* OF THAT WAR.

IF IT WAS UP TO ME I'D DESTROY EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.

JESUS CHRIST, LIEUTENANT! WE GOT *SURVIVORS* OUT THERE!

TANGO MIKES?

GOTTA BE. THEY'D'VE BEEN OUT THERE IN GROUND ZERO FOR... JESUS. TWO *WEEKS* NOW.

TELL ECHO BASE WE'LL TAKE THE RUN.

WE READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR, SURVIVORS. WE ARE PREPPING AN EXTRACTION TEAM.

PREPARE YOURSELVES AND RADIO BACK WHEN READY.

GET ME A VEHICLE READY.

I'M DRIVING OUT TO THE FARMHOUSE EXTRACTION POINT MYSELF.

YES, SIR.

WE'VE BEEN OPERATING IN THE DARK TOO LONG.

MORE SURVIVORS. LIEUTENANT...

...WHAT IF EVERLY-- HELL. WHAT IF IT *IS* GETTING BETTER OUT...

TIME WE FOUND OUT *EXACTLY* WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE.

MILLHAVEN. NOW.

...FXNNL...

...TOLD YOU, LOUIS...

...SNRXXX...

...M'RIGHT...

...PNNXX...

...ALWAYS RIGHT...

GRFGH...

G'DD'MMIT...

...HATE FALLING...

NNGH!

OW.

AW, FER... DID I GET HIT WITH A GUN BUTT AGAIN?

YUP.

IT WAS THOSE GUY I TOLD TO CAVITY SEARCH EACH OTHER, WASN'T IT.

THAT'D BE THEM.

YEAH, THAT MAKES SENSE.

THE HELL ARE WE?

WHEREVER WE ARE, IT SURE AIN'T CAMP ECHO.

ZOEY AND BILL?

"WITH THE DOCTOR." THAT'S ALL THEY'LL TELL ME.

SO. I WAS *RIGHT.* WE'RE *SCREWED.*

WELL, NOW I WOULDN'T SAY...

YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU WOULDN'T SAY. THAT'S WHY *I'M* SAYING IT.

AND DREAMING ABOUT IT.

YOU'VE BEEN MUMBLING "I TOLD YOU SO, LOUIS" FOR AN HOUR NOW.

HEH. YEAH. IT WAS A GOOD DREAM.

THEN YOU STARTED YELLING ABOUT FALLING.

OH, THAT. WE WERE BOTH FALLING WHILE I WAS TELLIN' YOU OFF.

FRANCIS...

I WAS PRETTY BRAVE ABOUT IT. *YOU* WERE REALLY SCARED, THOUGH.

FRANCIS. MAN, I THINK WE ARE IN A *LOT* OF TROUBLE HERE.

ALRIGHT, LEMME HANDLE THIS.

UM. WAIT. WHAT?

FOLLOW MY LEAD. I GOT A *PLAN.*

NO. FRANCIS. *NO.* LET'S TALK ABOUT--

[illegible]

[illegible]

DOES HE KNOW WE CAN'T HEAR HIM?

I'M GUESING NOT.

[illegible]!

HOLD ON, I'LL PUT ON THE TWO-WAY.

SHKT

--BECAUSE YOU'RE SHORT!

THIS "GOOD COP, TINY CHILD-SIZED COP" CRAP WON'T WORK ON ME. BECAUSE I *AM* A COP! HAH!

LOUIS! I THINK IT'S WORKING!

LOOK AT YOUR LITTLE TANGERINE-SIZED HEAD! WHERE DO YOU EVEN GET ARMY COSTUMES THAT SMALL?

YOU'RE TRYING TO GET ME ANGRY SO WE'LL COME IN THERE, AND YOU CAN OVERPOWER US AND ESCAPE, AREN'T YOU?

WHAT? *NO.*

OKAY, FINE, YES. SO WHAT?

JUST A HUNCH, SIR. AND YES-- I'M A LITTLE SHORT.

ALL THE WOMEN IN MY FAMILY ARE.

OHHH. YOU'RE A...

SOLDIER. YES, SIR. LET ME HELP YOU OUT HERE.

YOU'RE IN A HERMETICALLY SEALED STERILE ROOM WITH AN INDEPENDENT VENTILATION SYSTEM.

THE ONLY WAY WE'RE COMING IN THERE IS IF YOU ARE DEAD OR ON FIRE.

THE DOCTOR'S *WITH YOUR FRIENDS*. HE'LL BE HERE IN A *MINUTE*.

NOW SIT DOWN AND *STAY QUIET*.

SIR.

THAT WAS YOUR PLAN.
THAT WAS THE FIRST PART OF MY PLAN.
YEAH, LET'S RECAP SOME OF YOUR PLANS SO FAR.
"GO HELP THAT CRYING GIRL, LOUIS. SHE LOOKS SAD."
"LET'S FIND THE ARMY. THEY'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO."
"WE'RE LOCKED IN A TINY ROOM. I'LL PISS OFF THE GUYS WITH GUNS SO THEY'LL SHOOT LOUIS."
ALL GOOD PLANS. WHAT'S YER POINT?
HEY!
COME HERE A SECOND.
WHO, ME?
NO.
THE SMART ONE.
I STILL THINK HE MEANS ME.
UH HUH. LET ME GO CHECK IT OUT ANYWAY.
TEN BUCKS SAYS HE JUST WANTS TO SHOOT YA.
HOPE NOT.
I COULDA STAYED SITTING FOR THAT.
YEAH? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
JEFF, WHAT THE HELL?
I NEED TO KNOW THIS.
YOU'VE BEEN OUT THERE FOR TWO WEEKS, RIGHT?
HAVE THE WHISKEY DELTAS BEEN... CHANGING?
THAT'S NOT WHAT IT FELT LIKE. BUT YEAH.
WHISKEY DELTAS?
WALKING DEAD. ARE THEY... YOU KNOW, MUTATING?
ARE YOU KIDDING? JUST HOW LONG YOU GUYS BEEN COOPED UP HERE?
SO THEY AREN'T.
WAIT A MINUTE. YOU GUYS'VE NEVER SEEN A BOOMER?
A "BOOMER".
BIG FATASSED ZOMBIES THAT BARF ON YOU.
GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE.
OH, I AIN'T EVEN GOT TO THE SCREWED UP PART YET.
SEE, THE BARF ATTRACTS OTHER ZOMBIES. IT'S LIKE... I DUNNO, CAT NIP OR SOMETHING.
JESUS.
BUT THEY'RE NOT EVEN THE WORST ONES.

THERE'S THIS THING CALLED A *HUNTER*.

THEY'LL LEAP A HUNDRED FEET OFF A BUILDING, RIGHT ON *TOP* OF YOU.

RIP YOUR GUTS OUT WITH THEIR *CLAWS*.

HOLY SHIT...

THEN YOU GOT THE *TANKS*.

THE ZOMBIES HAVE *TANKS?*

DON'T NEED 'EM. THESE THINGS'RE THIRTY FEET TALL. ARMS LIKE *TREE TRUNKS*.

THEY'LL PICK A CAR UP JUST TO *BEAT YOU TO DEATH* WITH IT.

ALSO: *VAMPIRES*. RIGHT, BUDDY?

OH, MAN, ARE THEY THE WORST.

FRANCIS...

TURNIN' INTO BATS. LIVIN' IN CASTLES.

FRANCIS. FOR THE LAST TIME. *THERE ARE NO VAMPIRES.*

WE SAW 'EM WHEN YOU WERE GONE. YOU MISSED 'EM.

WHEN WAS I GONE?

THAT, UH... YOU KNOW, THAT TIME.

SHUT UP.

JENKINS WAS TELLING US ABOUT... SOMETHING CALLED A SMOKER?

YEAH, WHAT'S THAT ONE DO?

"...CAPTURES VICTIMS WITH ITS *LONG, ROPE-LIKE TONGUE.*"

LT. MORA, YOUR GIFT FOR FICTION AMAZES ME.

IT GOES ON. *GIANT* WHISKEY DELTAS. *EXPLODING* WHISKEY DELTAS.

I'M ESPECIALLY FOND OF THIS NEXT ONE: "WHISKEY DELTAS CAPABLE OF JUMPING TO HEIGHTS OF *THIRTY FEET OR MORE.*"

THE WALLS OF THIS COMPOUND ARE *TWENTY* FEET, LT. MORA.

EXTRACTION REPOR

IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I WOULD SAY YOUR REPORT WAS *TAILOR MADE* TO FOSTER DISSENTION IN MY RANKS.

I DROVE OUT TO THE FARMHOUSE EXTRACTION POINT MYSELF, SIR. *THIS IS WHAT I SAW.*

I'LL JUST BET YOU *DID.*

WE HAVE OUR *ORDERS*, LT. MORA, WHETHER YOU LIKE THEM OR NOT. SEARCH AND RESCUE. SIT TIGHT AND *WAIT*.

MAJOR EVERLY. SIR. WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, THIS BASE IS NO LONGER SECURE.

ECHO BASE TO THE NORTH IS EQUIPPED FOR A SUSTAINED ASSAULT.

WE, SIR, ARE NOT.

WE SHOULD CUT THE CARRIERS LOOSE AND--

ABANDON THE SURVIVORS UNDER OUR CARE, YOU MEAN.

YOU WOULD BE AMAZED AT HOW SICK I AM OF HEARING THEM.

LIEUTENANT, I AM AWARE OF YOUR VIEWS ON "CARRIERS".

LET ME BE CLEAR. THERE IS STILL A CHAIN OF COMMAND. I STILL HAVE A JOB TO DO. AND I INTEND TO GET THAT JOB DONE.

YOU WRITING GHOST STORIES ABOUT ZOMBIES BREAKING BARRICADES AND JUMPING OVER GODDAMN BUILDINGS DOES NOT HELP ME!

FROM NOW ON, LET ME DO MY JOB. YOU DO YOURS. WE ON THE SAME PAGE, SON?

YES SIR.

GOOD. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THIS.

DISMISSED.

"CHAIN OF COMMAND." WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM COMMAND IN NINE DAYS.

THIS IS A SICK JOKE. WE ARE ON OUR OWN OUT HERE.

RETREATING FROM THIS BASE IS NOT A DEFEAT. LOSING MEN DEFENDING IT IS.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO, SIR?

ROUND UP PENA, BROOKS AND DAVIS. MY QUARTERS. 1400.

I HAVE ONE DUTY: TO THE MEN WHO'VE PUT THEIR LIVES IN MY CARE.

I AM NOT GOING TO SACRIFICE MY PLATOON.

NOT FOR EVERLY.

"NOT FOR CARRIERS."

SPIT, PLEASE.

YOU'RE KIDDING.

SHE GIVIN' YOU TROUBLE, DOC?

WE'RE FINE, RIVERA.

MISS... PLEASE.

FOR THE LAST TIME, I AM *NOT INFECTED.*

WE WALKED, ON *FOOT*, OUT OF PHILADELPHIA, AND *BELIEVE* ME, WE SAW EVERY ZOMBIE ALONG THE WAY.

I'VE BEEN *BITTEN. SCRATCHED. BLED* ON. *PUKED* ON.

I'M FINE. *WE'RE* FINE. WE'RE *IMMUNE*, DOCTOR.

WE JUST WANT TO GET TO THE SAFE ZONE. OKAY?

ALRIGHT, *ENOUGH.*

YOU. SPIT IN THE DISH.

DUDE. SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE GONNA *SHOOT* ME IF I DON'T--

SPIT IN THE DISH!

THERE.

IS AMERICA SAFE NOW? CAN WE GO TO ECHO BASE?

ALMOST. I-- I NEED TO INSPECT ONE OF THE WOUNDS YOU MENTIONED.

JESUS CHRIST, WHAT *IS* THIS? ARE WE *DYING* OR SOMETHING?

SHOW HIM YOUR WOUND.

YEAH, NO. ALRIGHT? *NO.* I AM OFFICIALLY SICK OF YOU AND DOCTOR SPIT-JAR YELLING AT US AND NOT TELLING US ANYTHING.

WE JUST WANT TO--

SHOW HIM YOUR WOUND!

HEY! WHAT THE *HELL*, MAN?

THERE.

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER.

HUNH.

BACK IT UP, OLD MAN. YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE THE HERO HERE.

THAT'S RIGHT.

JUST THE *DISTRACTION.*

WHOK

ALRIGHT, ENOUGH BULLSHIT!

WHERE ARE WE?

WHY ARE YOU KEEPING US HERE?

TALK!

DON'T

AH-HUHH

DON'T BREATHE ON ME

DON'T BLEED ON ME PLEASE JESUS, DON'T

DON'T TOUCH ME

I DON'T...

I ONLY *HIT* HIM.

YOU MIGHT HAVE KILLED HIM.

RIVERA'S DOWN!

THUNK

DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

WE--

WE'RE FINE, WE'RE FINE!

GET HIM *OUT* OF HERE!

ALRIGHT. OKAY. SO...

YOU'RE *CARRIERS.* BOTH OF YOU.

YOU DON'T SHOW ANY *SYMPTOMS* OF THE VIRUS.

BUT YOU'RE STILL *INFECTED.*

I'M AFRAID YOU'VE BEEN TRANSMITTING IT ALL OVER PHILADELPHIA.

OH MY GOD.

SO *THAT'S* WHAT THIS IS ABOUT.

YOU DIDN'T *RESCUE* US.

YOU'RE HERDING US ALL *UP*.

YES.

AND BEFORE YOU GET INDIGNANT, I'D REMIND YOU THE ARMY *HAD* OTHER OPTIONS.

THIS WAS THE *HUMANE* ONE.

BUT... YOU'RE A DOCTOR.

HAVE YOU BEEN... IS THERE A...

CURE?

WE'RE TRYING.

THIS VIRUS DEFIES *ANYTHING* WE'VE EVER SEEN.

SOMETIMES IT'S AIRBORNE. SOMETIMES IT'S NOT.

IT MUTATES *DAILY*.

WE'RE TRYING TO CURE IT AND WE CAN'T EVEN PIN IT DOWN.

AS FOR CARRIERS...

ALL WE KNOW SO FAR IS THE CARRIER GENE RUNS ON THE FATHER'S SIDE.

YOU AND YOUR DAD HERE...

HE...

HE'S NOT MY FATHER.

PHILADELPHIA. 2 DAYS AFTER FIRST INFECTION.

I LET HER LIVE WITH YOU FOR A SEMESTER, WADE.

A *SEMESTER*, AND SHE'S DROPPING OUT.

HEY! I *WORK*, ALRIGHT?

SOME OF US CAN'T LIE AROUND THE *HOUSE* ALL DAY.

"HOUSE." WADE, YOU RENT AN *APARTMENT*.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, CAROLYN. *YOU AND KEVIN* LIVE IN *MY* HOUSE.

HOW. *DARE*. YOU.

OHHHH, YEAH.

NOW IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME.

IS THIS *FUNNY*, ZOEY?

DO YOU KNOW HOW *EXPENSIVE* COLLEGE IS?

I HAD A *SCHOLARSHIP*, MOM.

REGARDLESS. WE SENT YOU TO ALDRICH TO LEARN HOW TO *MAKE* FILMS.

UH HUH.

NOT... *WATCH* THEM IN YOUR FATHER'S APARTMENT ALL DAY.

ZOMBIES AND VAMPIRES AND... IT'S TRASH, HONEY.

MAYBE IT'S RESEARCH, MOM.

IF YOU BELIEVE THE PAPERS, ANYWAY.

UGH. THAT. IT'S A *FLU*.

WELL, FILM DEGREE WAS A GAMBLE. WE KNEW THAT GOIN' IN.

NOW SHE CAN JOIN THE FORCE LIKE HER OLD MAN.

YOU SHOULD SEE HER ON THE GUN RANGE! KNOWS HOW TO HOLD HERSELF IN A FIGHT, TOO.

WADE, STOP.

RIGHT HERE, GUYS.

MY DAUGHTER'S NOT GETTING SHOT AT BY COKEHEADS JUST TO KEEP THE FAMILY BUSINESS ALIVE.

STILL RIGHT HERE.

STAY AWAY FROM HIM, CAROLYN.

WADE.

WADE, THERE'S A CRAZY HOMELESS MAN IN YOUR LIVING ROOM.

HE'S GOT THAT... THAT *FLU*.

HEY. PAL? YOU'VE GOTTA **GO**.

YOU JUST NEED TO *APPLY* YOUR...

...SELF.

*JESUS! WADE! **DO** SOMETHING!*

MOM, GET BACK!

*MOM, COME **ON**!*

ALRIGHT, THAT'S *IT*. *LAST CHANCE, PAL!*

YOU HEAR ME? I AM COUNTING TO *THREE!*

ONE!

TWO!

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

MOM.

MOM!

ZOEY, CALL 911.

LYN? SWEETIE, IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.

HKK

HHK

HKK

HKHKKK

ZOEY, CALL 911!

HKK

HKK

EVERYTHING'S OKAY, BABY.

OGOD

OGOD

OGOD

HKK

EVERYTHING'S OKAY.

HKK

HKK

JUST HANG IN THERE, SWEETIE.

HK

I'M RIGHT HERE.

IT'S BUSY!

KEEP TRYING!

HK

I'M RIGHT HERE, LYNNIE.

JUST BE OKAY.

SSS

AAAAAGHHH!

DAD!

HELP

HELP ME...

MOM?

PLEASE.

PLEASE DON'T DO THIS...

DON'T...

RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

BLAM

NO!

LYNNIE...

DAD, YOU'RE GOING INTO SHOCK.

I'LL GO GET THE FIRST AID KIT AND--

NN!

I NEED TO STOP THE BLEEDING AND STITCH YOU UP.

REMEMBER THOSE ZOMBIE MOVIES I USED TO SNEAK YOU INTO WHEN YOU WERE A KID, ZOEY?

HEH. I REMEMBER HOW MAD MOM GOT WHEN SHE *FOUND OUT*.

YOU REMEMBER THE PART IN ALL OF 'EM WHEN THEY HAD TO SHOOT THE ONE GUY BEFORE HE TURNED?

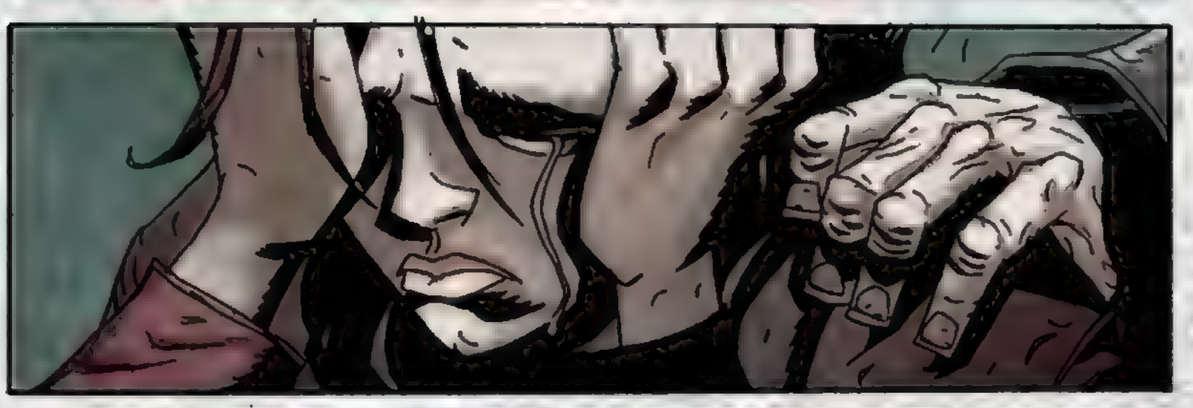
HEH. *SNIFF* YEAH.

WE ALWAYS MADE FUN OF THAT PART.

I LOVE YOU, ZOEY.

I LOVE YOU, DAD.

BLAM



THEY HAVEN'T KILLED YOU YET BECAUSE OF ME.

THEY HAVEN'T KILLED ME YET BECAUSE THEY WANT THEIR CURE.

IT HASN'T OCCURRED TO THEM YET THAT THERE MIGHT NOT *BE* ONE.

THAT *WE* MIGHT BE THE ONLY FUTURE THEY'VE GOT.

CARRIERS.

I...

I WANT YOU TO HELP ME ESCAPE.

IT'S ALREADY NOT SAFE HERE. SOME OF THE SOLDIERS...

THEY'LL KEEP US ALIVE AS LONG AS THEY THINK I CAN STOP THIS.

WHEN THEY FIGURE OUT I CAN'T...

THEY'RE GOING TO PUT US AGAINST A WALL AND SHOOT US.
DAMN IT. WE MIGHT BE TOO LATE.
MORA.
MORA'S COMING.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT *SOLDIERS* COMING TO KILL US?
INFECTED ARE ATTRACTED TO *NOISE*, DOC.
WHATEVER DUMBASS IS IN CHARGE HERE, HE JUST CALLED *EVERY ZOMBIE IN A HUNDRED-MILE RADIUS.*
DOCTOR, WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE. *NOW.*
AND WE'RE GOING TO NEED *GUNS.*
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WHAT IN THE *HELL...?*
YOU.
DO YOU HAVE *ANY* IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE?

I'VE SOUNDED THE CALL FOR EVACUATION, MAJOR.
YOU ARE RELIEVED OF COMMAND.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
SO WE'VE BEEN INFECTING PEOPLE THIS *WHOLE TIME?*
JESUS. THOSE *PILOTS...*
WE'VE BEEN CAUSING THE CRASHES...
AHH, WE DON'T KNOW THAT. THAT NEWS CHOPPER GUY'D BEEN *BIT.*
AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE BOAT PEOPLE?
THEIR *MARRIAGE* WAS IN TROUBLE, SURE. BUT OTHERWISE THEY SEEMED FINE.
MY JOB. I CAN NEVER GO BACK TO *MY JOB.*
SHIT, THEY'RE NEVER GONNA LET US BACK TO *ANYTHING!*
THIS IS IT, FRANCIS. YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I CAN EVEN *BE* WITH WITHOUT *KILLIN' 'EM.*
GREAT. NOW WE'RE BOTH SAD.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WHAT THE--?
HA HA! *YEAH!* YOU HEAR THAT?
OH, YOU'RE IN FOR IT NOW!
THEY'RE IN FOR IT?
FRANCIS, WE'RE LOCKED IN A ROOM WITH NO WEAPONS.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
ALRIGHT. NO MORE JOKING AROUND.
YOU NEED TO LET US OUT OF HERE, OR YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO *DIE.*
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NOISE. THEY'RE ATTRACTED TO *NOISE.*
WE'VE GOT ABOUT TWENTY SECONDS TO GET *ARMED* AND GET *OUTTA* HERE BEFORE--
AAAAAUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAAAAUGGGGGGGGUUUUUUAUAUAUUUUUHHHHGHH...
OHHH, SHIT.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
SCHKT
...RUN...
LET US OUT!
THIS IS *NOT* A DAMN *TRICK!* WE CAN HELP YOU!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, ANNIE?
JEFF, IF MORA HEARS WE LET *CARRIERS* ESCAPE, WE'RE--
UUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAHHAHHH...
AUUUUAUAUAUUUUUHHHGHH...

AUUUUUAUAUAUUUUUHHHHGHH...

DON'T SHOOT DON'T SHOOT THAT'S A WITCH!

ARE YOU INSANE?

SHE'LL WALK RIGHT PAST YOU! LOWER YOUR GUNS, GET FLAT UP AGAINST THE WALL!

MAN, I *KNOW* WHAT A WITCH IS AND THAT SOUNDS LIKE BAD ADVICE.

JESUS, *THINK* ABOUT IT!

WHY WOULD I *LIE* TO YOU ABOUT THIS?

YOU TWO ARE OUR ONLY CHANCE TO GET *OUT* OF HERE!

PLEASE.

THIS IS SO STUPID...

...QUIET...

CREAK

LET'S GET YOU GUYS SOME GUNS.

ALRIGHT, ZOMBIE EXPERTS...

THERE'S AN ARMORY DOWN THE HALL.

OH, SHIT!

STAY BACK, THERE'S A--

UNGH!

BRAT TAT TAT

FRANCIS! TAKE IT!

EVERYBODY WATCHIN'?

...YOU GUYS ARE GONNA *LOVE* THIS.

GET BACK!

SPLLLSH

BLUGH.

WHAM

I'M JUST CURIOUS. ARE THERE ANY OF THESE THINGS WE *CAN* SHOOT?

TELL YOU WHAT. GIMME YOUR PISTOL.

JUST SHOOT WHATEVER WE SHOOT FIRST.

DONE.

FRANCIS, HOW BAD YOU GET SPRAYED BACK THERE?

NOT BAD. WE'LL PROBABLY BE F--

WHAM

WHAM

THE SACRIFICE

PART THREE

FAR AS I KNOW IT'S HAPPENIN' RIGHT NOW.
I FIGURE MORA GETS A COURT MARTIAL FOR IT. AT LEAST. IT IS WARTIME.
AND HE'S STILL DOIN' IT.
TELL ME THAT AIN'T A LIEUTENANT WHO LOOKS AFTER HIS GODDAMN MEN.
SHOULDN'T TAKE YOUR MASK OFF, JIM.
HEH. YOU GONNA TELL CEDA ON ME, NATE?
VIRUS AIN'T AIRBORNE.
YOU SEE A CARRIER TRYIN' TO SPIT IN MY MOUTH, YOU LET ME KNOW.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
HA!
YOU HEAR THAT?
THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT MORA!
GET'CHER BAGS PACKED, MAN.
WE'RE FALLIN' BACK TO ECHO.
GHLLLGH
SHLKT

NUGH!

NOGH!

NOGHH!

WE GETTIN' NEAR THAT *ARMORY* YET, DOC?

MY ARMS ARE GETTIN' TIRED.

J-JUST UP AHEAD.

HUH.

WHY IS THE DOOR *STICKY?*

BOOMER SHIT?

NO. SMELLS MORE LIKE...

DBT DBT DBT DBT

ZOEY!

BILL!

OH, MAN, IT IS GOOD TO *SEE* YOU GUYS!

U.S. MILITARY PEANUT BUTTER

U.S. MILITARY PEANUT BUTTER

SWEET JESUS, IS THAT PEANUT BUTTER?

THAT *IS* PEANUT BUTTER.

YEP! ARMY SIZED. I COULD PUT MY HEAD IN THIS THING.

GIVE TO ZOEY.

MMFGHHSDFH. SHOGUHD. WHERE'D YOU ***FIND*** GHIS?

HOW HUNGRY ARE YOU?

INSHANELY.

THEN YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANNA KNOW.

HEY, BILL. HEARD YOU TWO WENT TO SEE A DOCTOR.

WHAT'S THE PROGNOSIS? STILL OLD?

SON, I AM ALMOST *HAPPY* TO HEAR YOUR HORSESHIT AGAIN.

REALLY? UHHH... KENNY ROGERS' BALLS CALLED.

THEY WANT THEIR HAIR BACK FROM YOUR FACE

ALRIGHT, DON'T PUSH IT.

LOUIS.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, SON. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT HERE?

PRETTY WELL STOCKED. MOSTLY M16S AND PISTOLS.

ME AND ANNIE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT A WAY OUT OF HERE. JEFF, ANNIE, THIS IS BILL.

NOT A FAN OF PEANUT BUTTER, ANNIE?

NOT ENOUGH TO TAKE MY MASK OFF.

TELL ME ABOUT THIS WAY OUT OF HERE.

TRAIN DEPOT IN THE EAST YARD. TROOP TRANSPORT.

TRAIN DEPOT? THAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE *BASE.*

HOW FAR WE TALKING? QUARTER MILE?

A QUARTER MILE OF SOLID *INFECTED.*

AND WHATEVER THESE *NEW* THINGS ARE.

IT'D BE SUICIDE.

"JEFF," WAS IT?

JEFF, THE FOUR OF US WALKED HERE FROM *PHILADELPHIA.*

I THINK WE CAN MAKE IT ACROSS A COURTYARD.

SO...

YOU HAVE A CLOSE ENOUGH RELATIONSHIP WITH KENNY ROGERS' BALLS THAT THEY *CALLED* YOU, HUH?

OH, RIGHT. UH...

WELL, I TOOK A MESSAGE FOR LOUIS.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, FRANCIS.

THERE HAS *NOT* BEEN A LOT TO LAUGH ABOUT TODAY.

THAT SUCKS.

DUDE. HOW DO YOU *DO* IT?

HOW ARE YOU STILL CRACKING JOKES WHEN EVERYTHING JUST KEEPS GETTING SHITTIER AND *SHITTIER?*

SHITTIER?

ZOEY, THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE IS THE BEST THING THAT'S EVER *HAPPENED* TO ME.

PHILADELPHIA. 2 DAYS AFTER FIRST INFECTION.

IT'S OKAY...

I'M A *COP.*

$1,299.99

OKAY, OFFICER.

AND WHY ARE YOU STEALING A FLATSCREEN TV?

UM. IT'S...

EVIDENCE. FOR A CRIME.

$1,299.99

ZOID'S PAW

ZOID'S

NO PARK ANY TIM

UH-HUH.

AND WHICH CRIME WOULD THAT BE?

UH. THIS ONE?

ALRIGHT, DON'T SHOOT.

'CAAAAUSE I'M GONNA RUN NOW.

...AND *THAT'S* WHY I'M GOING TO PRISON.

I'M GONNA MISS YOU, FRANCIS.

YEAH. I'M GONNA...MISS YOU TOO, BECKY.

SANDRA.

WHATEVER. WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO LEARN EACH OTHER'S NAMES DURIN' CONJUGAL VISITS.

UNLESS YOU'RE GOING TO JAIL IN ANOTHER STATE, FRANCIS, YOU AIN'T *GETTIN'* NO CONJUGALS.

HA HA, YEAH. WHAT?

PENNSYLVANIA DON'T DO CONJUGALS, BUDDY.

GODDAMNIT. NEXT TIME I IMPERSONATE A COP, REMIND ME TO DO IT IN OHIO.

BETTER NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME, THEN.

COME ON, FRANCIS.

GLOMP

AW!

JESUS, BECKY!

...HWUGGGHHHH...

OH GOD, FRANCIS! I'M SO SORRY!

MY VEST!

NO OFFENSE. BUT THIS AIN'T WORTH RISKING MY VEST FOR.

FRANCIS. WAIT.

OW!

DAMN IT, BECKY!

YOU PUKE ON MY *VEST!*

YOU *BITE* ME!

WHAT'S NEXT, YOU GONNA TAKE A *CRAP* ON ME?

WHEN I GO TO JAIL IN OHIO, YOU ARE *BANNED* FROM CONJUGAL VISITS!

OKAY, MAYBE ONE VISIT.

OH, HEY BECKAGH HOLY SHIT!

CH-CHOOM

WHOA.

THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

DUKE, YOU JUST SHOT SANDRA!

NOPE.

DUKE, WE ALL JUST WATCHED YOU DO IT, YOU --

SHE WAS A ZOMBIE, YA IDIOT.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU FOLKS, BUT THIS AIN'T NO FLU.

THAT'S JUST WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO THINK.

FIRST THEY TRIED TO KILL US WITH HEROIN.

THEN THEY BUILT THE SATELLITES.

THEN, CELL PHONES.

CONNECT THE DOTS, MAN.

IT WAS ALL LEADIN' UP TO THIS.

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE.

AND YOU FELL FOR IT HOOK, LINE AND SINKER.

NOW WHO'S CRAZY.

YOU ARE, DUKE.

BUT YOU ARE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING.

IF EVERYBODY OUT THERE'S A ZOMBIE...

...THEN EVERYBODY'S ZOMBIES BUT US.

ZOMBIES CAN'T PUT US IN JAIL.

ZOMBIES CAN'T DO ANYTHING.

THEY'RE IDIOTS.

AND THAT MEANS...

...WE CAN DO WHATEVER THE HELL WE WANT!

AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I WANNA DO.

AND IF THESE THINGS'RE TRYIN' TA KILL US...

DUKE! DANNY! GRAB THAT JUKEBOX AND FOLLOW ME!

WHAM

EVERYBODY GRAB A GUN AND A BEER!

THE NIGHT'S JUST GETTIN' WARMED UP, AND WE GOT PLENTY A' BOTH!

DANNY! WHERE WE AT WITH THAT JUKEBOX?

RIGHT HERE, MAN... *NGG*

YOU WANNA TELL US WHY YOU YOU MADE US LUG IT UP TWO FLIGHTS OF STAIRS?

'CAUSE, DANNY...

..Y'CAN'T GET A PARTY GOIN' WITHOUT A LITTLE MUSIC.

JESUS.

THERE MUST BE A *THOUSAND* OF 'EM...

999!

998!

997!

LT. MORA! MAJOR EVERLY WANTS EVERYONE TO REPORT TO THE EAST YARD! THEY'RE MAKING A STAND THERE!

DO NOT RESPOND, SERGEANT!

WE ARE NO LONGER IN THE SAVING-THE-WORLD BUSINESS!

WE ARE SAVING OURSELVES!

ALRIGHT, PULL ME UP.

WE FIND A VEHICLE, WE CAN BUG OUT OF THIS SHITHOLE *ONCE AND FOR ALL.*

AGH! GOD DAMN IT!

I CAN'T DO THAT, SIR.

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, SERGEANT?

PULL ME UP!

SIR, YOUR *MASK* IS OFF.

SO THROW ME A F#%@ING SPARE!

FINE.

IF I TURN, *KILL ME.*

HAPPY? PULL ME UP.

DO YOU HEAR ME?

COME BACK HERE! THAT IS AN ORDER, SERGEANT!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, HENDRICKS, IT'S A *SCRATCH!*

DON'T LET ME DIE BECAUSE OF SOME *CEDA SAFETY BULLSHIT!*

SIR. YOU'VE BEEN *COMPROMISED.*

RIGHT.

ALRIGHT, NEW MEAT, LISTEN UP.

IT'S A *QUARTER MILE* TO THE TRAINYARD.

WHEN WE GET THERE, WE'RE GETTING ON THE FIRST TRAIN POINTING *SOUTH.*

YOU WANT TO JOIN US, THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS.

AS FOR GETTING THERE: I DON'T CARE *HOW* MUCH TRAINING YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT.

YOU STAY CLOSE. YOU KEEP UP. AND YOU DON'T DO SHIT 'TILL YOU SEE *US FOUR* DO IT FIRST.

YOU *FALL* BEHIND...

WE *LEAVE* YOU BEHIND.

HEY.

HEY, KID.

DIDN'T WANT TO INTERRUPT YOUR TOUGH GUY SPEECH BACK THERE, BUT... WHY SOUTH?

BEEN THINKING OF A WAY OUT OF ALL THIS. FOR THE FOUR OF US.

I'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE TRAIN, KID. PROMISE.

UNTIL THEN... I NEED YOU TO TRUST ME.

SURE, BILL.

BY THE WAY? I CALL BULLSHIT.

NO *WAY* YOU'RE LEAVING THE NEW MEAT IF THEY FALL BEHIND.

WATCH ME.

HOW ABOUT US? YOU LEAVING US BEHIND TOO?

NEVER.

WE COME BACK FOR OUR OWN.

NOT... *WHUFF* MANY ZOMBIES AROUND SO FAR.

THIS IS GOOD. THIS IS VERY GOOD.

NO, MAN. THIS IS BAD. THIS IS *VERY VERY* BAD.

ZOMBIES ARE LIKE... PIRANHAS. THEY AIN'T TOO *CHOOSY* ABOUT WHO THEY ATTACK, YOU KNOW?

RIGHT...

POINT BEIN', YOU JUMP INTO A LAKE FULLA PIRANHAS, AND YOU *AIN'T* GETTIN' ATTACKED?

MEANS THERE'S A *SHARK* AROUND.

THOOM

GUYS! YOU HEAR THAT? I THINK WE BETTER...

...DEAL WITH THIS IDIOT POINTING A GUN AT US.

THOOM

UH...

HEY, MAN! YOU ALRIGHT?

YOUR FAULT

ALL OF THIS IS YOUR FAULT

WHY'D WE STOP?

SO? I GOT A GUN.

GUY WITH A GUN.

YEAH, WELL. YOU AREN'T CRAZY.

LISTEN, MAN, THERE'S SOMETHIN' REAL DAMN BIG COMIN' THIS WAY, YOU MIGHT WANNA...

YOUR FAULT

I... WHATEVER, MAN. SURE.

DON'T *AGREE* WITH HIM!

I'M *TRYING* TO NEGOTIATE--

HERE, LET ME TRY.

UHHH... HELLO THERE!

I AM A COP. WE'VE BEEN INVESTIGATING ... WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE UPSET ABOUT.

AND, UH... IT'S LOUIS'S FAULT.

LOUIS.

WHICH... ONE OF YOU.. IS *LOUIS?*

THOOM

FRANCIS!

THAT'S RIGHT! *MY NAME IS FRANCIS.*

THANK YOU, *LOUIS.*

IT'S WORKING...

EVERYBODY BUT LOUIS GET READY TO RUN...

ALRIGHT, ENOUGH HORSESHIT.

THOOM

WHAM

HAUL ASS, PEOPLE!

LOUIS...

...LOUIS...

THOOM!

L--

THERE'S A COPTER TAKING OFF! WE COULD FLAG IT DOWN! WE COULD--

KEEP MOVING.

THUD

WHAT THE HELL IS...?

GET US UP! GET US UP!

OW.

OW OW OW...

WH-TNKKKK!

GUG GUG GUG GUG

RUN AND GUN, ANNIE!

DON'T LET IT CLOSE THE DISTANCE!

OH SHIT OH SHIT WHAT DO WE DO

HE'S THROWING THE ROAD AT US!

YEAH, THEY'LL DO THAT.

RELOADING!

RRRRRRRRUMMMMM

HEY, ZOEY! BE RIGHT BACK!

UHHH. HEY, LOUIS.

DOIN' GOOD, MAN...

ALMOST THERE...

GET READY TO JUMP...

...OUT OF A MOVIN' VEHICLE GOD DAMN WAS THIS A STUPID PLAN.

WHND

SCREEEEEEEEE

BILL, WHY IS LOUIS DOING THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN?

GAS.

HE'S LEAKING GAS.

SMASSHHHHHHH

MOVE MOVE MOVE MOVE MOVE!

LOUIS! JESUS CHRIST, SON...

AHUH. AHUH. HEY, GUYS.

BATOOOOM

TRAIN TRACKS.

SEE, FRANCIS? I TOLD YOU WE'D MAKE IT.

THERE'S THE HOLDOUT SPOT. WE'D BETTER JOIN UP.

YOU SURE? YOU CAN COME WITH US.

NAH. WE'VE GOT HEAVY ARTILLERY. A CHOKE POINT.

WE'LL FIGHT OFF THIS WAVE, THEN HEAD TO ECHO.

ANNIE. THEY NEVER STOP COMING.

ZOEY, WE CAN'T GO WITH YOU GUYS. YOU KNOW THAT.

THESE GASMASKS... THEY MIGHT...

NO, I KNOW.

GOOD LUCK, GUYS.

TRAIN, PEOPLE! MOVE!

LOUIS! YOU STILL GOT THOSE PIPES?

DAMN RIGHT, BILL!

THROW 'EM!

ALL OF 'EM!

UM. DO WE *KNOW* HOW TO DRIVE A TRAIN?

SHOULDN'T WE... I DUNNO. TURN IT ON FIRST?

I CAN. HELP ME FIND A STEERING WHEEL.

LOOK FOR WIRES. I CAN HOTWIRE IT.

CHNK

CHNK

HERE THEY COME! LET 'EM HAVE IT!

WHAT THE HELL *IS* THAT?

THEY'RE INSIDE THE PERIMETER!

SHOOT THE TONGUES!

GO! GO! GO!

--TOO MANY--

--BACK! FALL *BACK!*

--SIR, EAST WALL IS NOT RESPONDING!

--RETREAT TO THE--

JESUS CHRIST, THEY'RE EVERY-WHERE--

--DOWN TO ME AND GARCIA HERE, WE *AAEEEGH*--

NORTH WALL, RESPOND!

SOUTH WALL, RESPOND!

ANYONE! IS THERE *ANYONE* STILL OUT THERE?

BILL, SLOW DOWN A SEC!

AHUH

AHUH

AHUH

BILL? SLOW DOWN!

THERE'S MORE PEOPLE COMING!

DAMN IT!

BILL, THEY'RE GETTING *SLAUGHTERED* OUT THERE!

STOP THE TRAIN! SOME OF THEM COULD STILL CATCH UP TO US!

BILL? STOP THE--

ZOEY.

WE'RE NOT STOPPING THIS TRAIN.

I-- WHAT? ARE YOU *KIDDING?*

WE ALREADY LOST THE DOC BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T *WAIT* FIVE MINUTES!

BILL, WE DO THIS *ALL THE TIME!* IT'S WHAT WE *DO!*

NO.

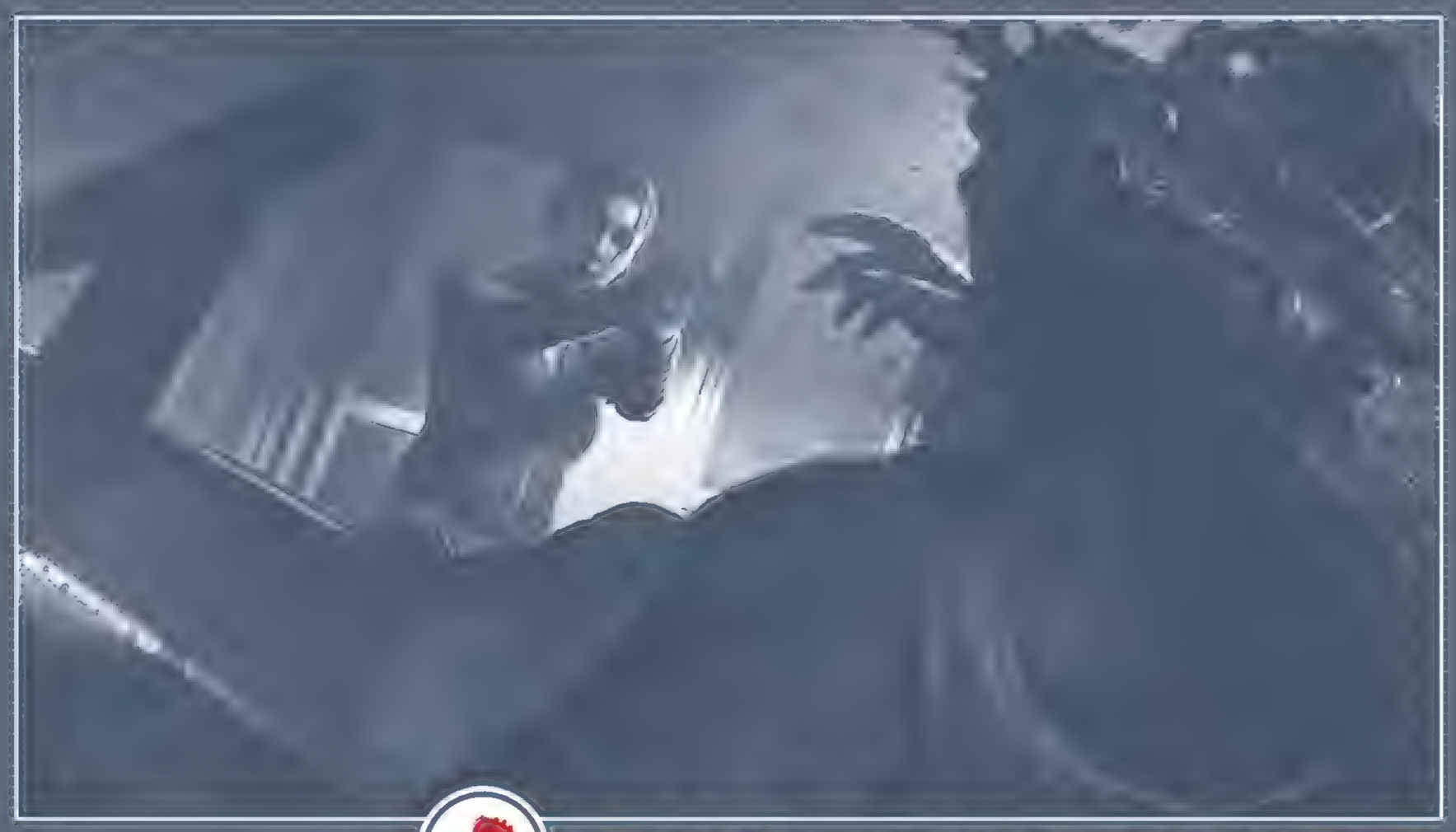
WE LOOK AFTER OUR OWN.

BILL.

STOP. THE TRAIN.

BILL!

STOP THE DAMN TRAIN!



THE SACRIFICE

PART FOUR

AHHHHHHHHHH...

THIS...

THIS I DON'T HATE.

HUH?

AHOY THERE! PERMISSION TO BOARD YOUR ISLAND, SIR?

WE WERE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS, EXPERIMENTING WITH *BOLD NEW TOPLESS BEER-BREWING TECHNIQUES* WHEN THE INFECTION HIT.

HE'S *CUTE!*

WE SHOULD MAKE *BEER* FOR HIM!

NO! LET'S *KISS!*

YAYYYY!

HEY, GUYS! YOU WANT TO COME OVER TO *MY* ISLAND?

SHUT UP, LOUIS! NOBODY WANTS TO GO TO YOUR STUPID ISLAND.

I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU HERE: YOU GIRLS *REALLY LUCKED OUT.*

FRANCISLAND HAS GOT IT ALL: SWIMMING POOLS, FIVE STAR RESTAURANTS, TENNIS COURTS...

WE'VE EVEN GOT A FULL-TIME BUTLER!

BILL, TAKE THIS UP TO THE MANSION.

SHUT UP, FRANCIS. SOMETHING ABOUT VIETNAM. HORSESHIT.

YOU CAN JUST IGNORE HIM. I DO.

FRANCIS!

WHAT? I'M ENJOYING MYSELF HERE.

FRANCIS!

GODDAMNIT. *FINE.* I'M WAKING UP.

JESUS, *WHAT?*

DUDE, HELP ME OUT HERE! HOW CAN YOU *NOT* BE INTERESTED IN THIS?

YOU'RE RIGHT. LEMME GO SEE WHAT THE BIKINI GIRLS THINK ABOUT THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.

I...DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT--

ZZZZ

FINE.

BUT JUST BECAUSE *HE'S* AN IDIOT...

...DOESN'T MEAN *YOU'RE* OFF THE HOOK, BILL.

ZOEY. LISTEN.

THE *FLORIDA KEYS*, BILL?

DAMN IT, I *TRUSTED* YOU!

WE LET A *DOCTOR* DIE, YOU ASSHOLE.

WE LET *SOLDIERS* DIE.

AND FOR WHAT? SO WE CAN RUN OFF TO SOME ISLAND AND *HIDE?*

BILL, WE *KNOW* THERE'S MORE CARRIERS OUT THERE.

PEOPLE LIKE *US.*

WE COULD *FIND* THEM.

WE COULD FIGHT *BACK.*

ZOEY, WE BEEN FIGHTIN' *BACK* SINCE WE STARTED OUT FROM PHILLY.

WE SHOT OUR WAY THROUGH *HELL* TO GET TO THAT SAFE ZONE. ALMOST DIED TEN TIMES OVER.

WE GOT *LUCKY.*

AND THEY LOCKED US UP AND TRIED TO *KILL* US.

WE *TRIED* IT YOUR WAY.

THE KEYS, WELL...

IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO GET TO FROM HERE. IT'S *MILES* OFF THE MAINLAND. FULLA INHABITABLE ISLANDS. GOOD WEATHER ALL YEAR ROUND.

NO MORE ARMY. NO MORE JAILS.

NO MORE *ZOMBIES.*

I KNOW IT HURTS, KID, BUT WE *CAN'T SAVE EVERYBODY.*

WE GOTTA LOOK OUT FOR OUR OWN. OR *WE WILL DIE.* THAT IS AS SIMPLE AS I CAN MAKE IT.

I'M NOT *SAD* BECAUSE WE COULDN'T SAVE EVERYBODY, BILL.

I'M ANGRY BECAUSE I WANT MY *WORLD BACK.*

I MEAN, HALF THE TIME I THINK YOU'RE *ENJOYING* THIS.

I... ***HATE.*** THIS.

I'M WILLING TO *DIE* IF IT MEANS WE FIGHT BACK.

IF IT MEANS WE FIND MORE PEOPLE LIKE *US*, AND WE WIPE THESE F*ç$ING THINGS OFF THE *FACE OF THE EARTH.*

AND YOU WANT TO RUN OFF TO AN ISLAND AND *LEAVE EVERYBODY?*

WHO *ELSE* HAVE YOU LEFT BEHIND, BILL?

WHO ELSE ARE YOU *GOING* TO LEAVE BEHIND?

I, UH... NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THIS, BUT...

I'M GONNA GO HANG OUT WITH LOUIS.

I'LL COME WITH YOU.

VETERANS HOSPITAL

PHILADELPHIA 2 DAYS AFTER FIRST INFECTION.

SO...

ARE YOU EXPECTING ANY *FAMILY?*

I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY, THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU...

UM.

SO.

YOU'RE A VETERAN?

IT'S A VETERAN'S HOSPITAL.

IT'S ACTUALLY A *VERY* COMMON PROCEDURE.

THERE'S *NOTHING* AT ALL TO BE WORRIED A

I DIDN'T ASK.

OH. UH... YEAH, YOU ACTUALLY *CAN'T* SMOKE IN HERE. SORRY. I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU EARL--

YOU A DOCTOR?

UM. NO, NOT YET. I'M A RESIDENT.

HA HA. *COUGH.* WHEW!

THAT LIKE A NURSE?

NOT... EXAC-- IT MEANS I'M STUDYING TO BECOME A DOCTOR.

OOO. MISTER OVERBECK, THAT CIGARETTE...

KID?

YES, MISTER OVERBECK?

GO PRACTICE SOMEWHERE ELSE.

I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU COUNT DOWN FROM TEN, OKAY, BILL?

YEAH, ALRIGHT...

TEN...

NINE...

EIGHT...

SEV--

SEVEN...

SCHKKKK!!

RRRRRIPPP

CAN'T THINK

GODDAMN DRUGS THEY

CAN'T

DON'T BLACK OUT

WHAT

NO

CRACK!

NNNAGH!

RUN.

IS THIS HAPPENIN

REAL IS

RUN.

...A-HUH...

...A-HUH...

...A-HUH...

THERE.

MEDICAL STAFF ONLY

DON'T BLACK OUT.

DON'T *PANIC.*

FIND SOMETHING SHARP.

KILL IT.

THEN GET *HOME.*

...GODDAMN IT, WHERE...

...EVERYTHING HURTS...

GODDAMNIT, STAY WITH IT!

SOMETHING SHARP.

SOMETHING SHARP.

SOMETH--

HEH.

SPLTCH

EMERGENCY

CREEEAK

KKKKKKKKK

...I FIGURE WE'RE GONNA WANT TO FIND A HOUSE ON A *POINT.*

GET A GOOD VIEW OF ANY INCOMING SHIPS, YOU KNOW?

GOOD IDEA. WE'LL ALSO NEED A *PIT*-- BURN ANY INFECTED WE FIND ON THE ISLAND.

NOT SINCE LOUIS SHOWED BILL HOW TO MAKE A PIPE BOMB.

SO... YOU AND BILL. ARE YOU STILL...

YOU EVER SEEN THEM THIS HAPPY?

SHIT, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.

LET'S FIND A *SMALL* ISLAND.

NOT *TOO* SMALL. WE MIGHT BE THERE FOR A WHILE.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, LET'S TALK *SUPPLIES.* WE'RE GONNA NEED--

FURIOUS WITH HIM? YES.

SORT OF. UGH. I DON'T KNOW.

THIS ALL HAPPENED SO FAST. ALL THE SHIT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER...

I'VE JUST GOTTEN USED TO SEEING YOU GUYS AS *FAMILY.*

I MEAN...

I LIKE BILL. I *LOVE* BILL.

I JUST DON'T THINK I *KNOW* BILL.

WELL, I'LL SAY *THIS* FOR BILL.

HE MIGHT NOT LISTEN MUCH...

HE'S PRETTY OLD.

HIS BEARD SMELLS.

HE--

IS THERE A "BUT" COMING, FRANCIS?

RIGHT. RIGHT.

HOLD ON.

SMOKER!

RELOADIN'.

LOOK. THE IDIOTS I HUNG OUT WITH BEFORE I MET YOU THREE? GOOD BUNCHA GUYS TO DRINK WITH, NO QUESTION. BUT TRUST ME. WE'D HAVE BEEN DEAD *TWO WEEKS AGO* WITH 'EM.

BILL MIGHT NOT ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING.

BUT HE ALWAYS DOES IT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS.

HEY, GUYS!

CHECK IT OUT! I THINK I FOUND OUR BOAT!

OH, MAN, A *YACHT?*

AWESOME.

WE AGREED TO FIND A *SAILBOAT*, LOUIS. IF--

ENOUGH WITH THE SAILBOAT. THIS A BOAT. IT FLOATS. I'M SICK OF WALKIN'.

WE GOTTA STOP FOR GAS, *I'LL* GO FETCH IT.

YEAH, COME ON, BILL, *LOOK* AT THIS THING! IT'S *A PALACE!*

YOU GOTTA LOOSEN UAGH*HH!*

LOUIS!

WE'RE COMIN', LOUIS!

OH, SHIT!

AUUUUGH! SHIT! SHIT!

JESUS, YOU FELL *TWO FEET.* SUCK IT UP.

SOMETHIN'S PULLIN' ME *DOWN*, MAN!

THAT'S GRAVITY. IT'S OKAY, IT PULLS ON US, TOO.

NRRRAGHH!

I'M OKAY!

LEMME SEE WHAT THE *HELL* WAS...

THIS AIN'T OUR BOAT.

EVERYBODY GET OUT A MOLOTOV.

SOON AS I'M DOWN...

THROW 'EM.

BURN THIS BOAT TO THE GROUND.

YEAH. SO... WHAT WAS IT? A WITCH?

I'LL BET IT WAS A WITCH.

I KNOW MY WITCH ATTACKS, AND *THAT* WAS A WITCH ATTACK.

IT WAS A WITCH, RIGHT?

WELL.

IT *FLOATS*.

LOUIS, WHY DON'T YOU STICK YOUR LEG IN, SEE IF THERE'S ANY WITCHES.

YEAH, IT'S PRETTY FUNNY.

YEAH, *REAL* FUNNY, FRANCIS.

ALRIGHT, KNOCK IT OFF. BOTH OF YOU.

COVER ME. I'LL CHECK IT OUT.

WELL, HOH-LEE *SHIT*...

KIDS...

...I THINK WE JUST FOUND OUR TICKET OFF THE MAINLAND.

MAN! *LOOK* AT ALL THIS STUFF! WHO'D LEAVE ALL THIS *BEHIND?*

SOMEBODY WHO MEANT TO COME *BACK*.

THE *BRIDGE* IS DOWN.

THEY MUSTA LEFT TO *RAISE* IT.

I BET THAT THING MAKES A *TON* OF NOISE GOING UP.

GOD.

THEY MUST HAVE CALLED EVERY ZOMBIE IN THE *CITY* DOWN THERE.

HRM.

AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO NOW, AREN'T WE?

YEAH.

I THOUGHT SO. BECAUSE IT SOUNDED SO STUPID. THAT WAS HOW I KNEW.

WE MAKE THIS QUICK. WE DON'T TAKE *ANY* CHANCES.

WE'RE TOO GODDAMN CLOSE TO GET KILLED NOW.

LOUIS-- YOU STAY WITH THE BOAT.

WHOA, WHOA, *WHOA.* ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

YOUR *LEG'S* BUSTED UP, SON. WE AIN'T GOT A HELLUVA LOT OF OPTIONS HERE..

WE'LL RAISE THE BRIDGE AND COME BACK FOR YOU.

BILL. YOU SEE THAT GUY?

HE STAYED WITH THE BOAT.

ALRIGHT.

GOOD POINT.

GET YOUR ASS UP THERE, FRANCIS!

PUSH THE BUTTON!

WE'LL SEE WHO'S ORDERIN' WHO AROUND ON THE *ISLAND.*

ME.

GIVIN' LOTS OF ORDERS.

YOU.

"THAT WAS A GREAT ORDER, FRANCIS."

"LOUIS WAS DEAD WEIGHT AFTER ALL."

"YOU'RE SO GODDAMN SMART. I SHOULD READ A SHIT-TONNA BOOKS SO I CAN KEEP UP WITH HOW GODDAMN SMART YOU--"

AW, YOU ARE F--

BILL!

NOTHIN'S HAPPENING!

DOESN'T THAT JUST *$%*¢ING FIGURE.*

NEW PLAN, PEOPLE!

FRANCIS! STAY HERE WITH LOUIS!

ZOEY! YOU'RE WITH ME!

LOOK, KID. I, UH... KNOW WE AIN'T BEEN...

FORGET IT.

THE BOAT'S THE PLAN NOW AND I'M *HERE*.

LET'S GET THIS DONE.

BILL! OVER HERE!

CHRIST, THIS THING'S ANCIENT...

C'MON, TURN OVER, YOU STUPID GENERATOR...

GRT-GRT-GRT!

YES!

WE'RE IN BUSINESS, BILL!

HHHHH

GRNNNNNNNNNNNNNN...

GOOD. LET'S GET TO THAT ISLAND IN THE KEYS...

RRRRROOOOOOAAAAARRRRRR!

"...SO I NEVER HAVE TO HEAR THAT GODDAMN SOUND AGAIN."

FRANCIS!
PUT THE BRIDGE UP!
IF THIS DOESN'T WORK I'M GONNA...
...I DUNNO. DIE I GUESS.
IT'S ON, IT'S ON, GET UP HERE!
WE AINT' SEEN A SAFE HOUSE IN A LONG GODDAMN TIME! DON'T MAKE ME WASTE THE LAST OF MY AMMO COVERIN' YOUR SLOW ASSES!
OKAY, I KNEW THE BRIDGE WAS GONNA BE LOUD, BUT...
HOLY SHIT, IS THAT LOUD.

OF COURSE.
DON'T WORRY, GUYS!
BRIDGE'LL BE RAISED *LONG* BEFORE THEY GET TO US!
WE'LL BE *TOO HIGH UP* TO GET TO!
WE KEEP QUIET? THEY'LL PROBABLY JUST HANG AROUND A BIT, THEN--
GREAT. BRIDGE STOPPED.
RRRRRGGG! I *KNEW* IT! I *HATE* THAT GENERATOR!
OH. *AND* THERE'S FOUR TANKS COMIN' AT US. *THANKS,* LOUIS.
WHAT?! WHAT THE HELL DID *I* DO?
OPTIMISM. YOU JINXED US.

GUYS.

I GOT A *BAD* FEELING ABOUT THIS.

WAIT, WHAT?

LOUIS, COME ON. WE--

WE BEEN THROUGH WORSE THAN *THIS*, MAN. THIS IS--

THIS IS *NOTHING.*

YOU'RE THE ONE SHOULD BE *SAD*, FRANCIS.

WE MADE IT THROUGH THIS?

I WAS GONNA GIVE YOUR DUMB ASS A *JOB.*

OKAY, *SHUT UP* WITH THAT KIND OF TALK.

WE'VE GOT *SOME* AMMO LEFT. WE JUST NEED...

TO...

SHIT!

GOD *DAMN* IT! WE'VE COME THIS FAR! IT CAN'T *END* LIKE THIS!

I LOVE YOU, ZOEY.

I LOVE *ALL* YOU GUYS.

LISTEN. I WANT YOU TO *KILL* ME BEFORE--

SAVE IT!

COVER ME! I GOT THIS!

BILL!

YOU HEARD THE MAN! *COVER* HIM!

YOU'LL NEVER STOP COMIN', DO YOU?

EVERY TIME I THINK WE'RE *DONE*...

EVERY TIME I THINK, "SHE'S FINALLY *SAFE*..."

"I CAN FINALLY *REST*..."

THERE YOU ARE AGAIN.

LIKE A BAD NIGHTMARE.

AND I HAVE HAD.

ENOUGH.

EAT FIRE, YOU GODDAMN ANIMALS.

THAT GOT YOUR ATTENTION!

THIS WAY YOU SONS OF BITCHES...

WHAT IS HE *DOING?*

HE'S GETTING ALL THE TANKS TO FOLLOW HIM, LOUIS!

HE'S GOING TO GET *KILLED!*

WELL, NOT *ALL* OF 'EM FOLLOWED HIM.

THIS BRIDGE AIN'T HIGH UP ENOUGH FOR THAT TANK.

YEAH. LET'S JUST HOPE BILL FINDS THAT GENERATOR...

...BEFORE THE TANK FIGURES THAT OUT.

ALMOST THERE.

DO IT, YOU OLD USELESS BASTARD.

GET TO WORK.

GET THEM OUT OF HERE. GET THEM SAFE.

DON'T LET HER DOWN.

CLICK

CRK RKR KRKRKRKRKRKRK

YES!

HE *DID* IT!

HA HAAAA! HE DID IT!

SOMEBODY MUST'VE MOVED THAT BRIDGE SINCE I LOOKED LAST.

'CAUSE IT LOOKS ABOUT A MILLION MILES AWAY.

NO. DON'T THINK LIKE THAT.

YOU CAN STILL MAKE IT BACK.

YOU CAN STILL MAKE IT B--

THOOM

AH-HUGH...

AH-HUGH...

AH-HUGH...

TK-CHAK

AH-HGH...

HEH.

HOLD YER HORSES...

...I'LL BE WITH YA IN A MINUTE.

ALRIGHT, F*&% THIS!

I'M GONNA GO GET THE OLD GUY!

HE'S GONE, FRANCIS.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT! BILL'S THE TOUGHEST OLD BUZZARD I EVER MET, AND HE'S ***DOWN THERE*** AND HE ***NEEDS US!*** WE--

FRANCIS. ***HE'S GONE.***

HE DID THIS FOR ***US.***

IF YOU GO DOWN THERE, HE DID IT FOR ***NOTHING.***

GODDAMNIT.

WE'LL WAIT THIS OUT.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SMOKERS.

BUT OTHERWISE, WE SHOLD BE SAFE UP HERE. WE STAY QUIET, THE HORDE'LL DISPERSE.

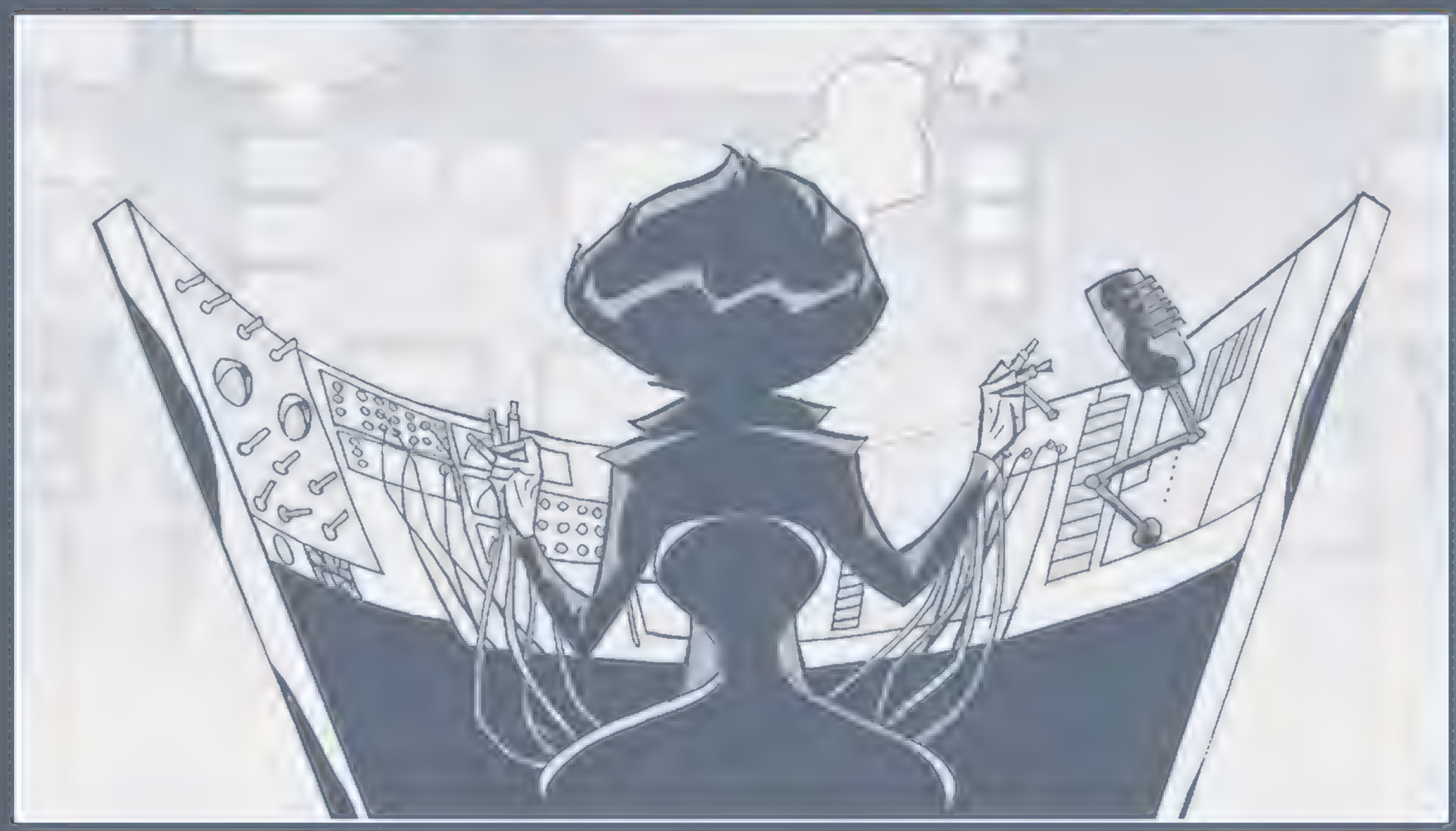
THEN WHAT?

WE GET LOUIS TO THE BOAT.

AND WE GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

WE LOOK AFTER OUR OWN.

TEAM FORTRESS® 2



A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ

Hello, person reading this in a library, at a friend's house, or, most likely, in the bathroom of a chain bookstore, and congratulations for beating the system. Hello also to those of you who paid for this book, as well as an apology that you were unable to get a library card, find a friend, or use the toilet. Better luck next time!

Team Fortress 2 didn't start with a lot of story. When we first shipped the game, there wasn't room for one. But *TF2* was always conceived as an ongoing project, with regular game updates. Over time, as the updates evolved into more ambitious events, having to explain how all of the new features, items, and game modes actually worked became a much bigger job. Writing reams of dry explanatory copy sounded like a nightmare, so we entertained ourselves by mixing the update descriptions up as much as possible: one might be written from the perspective of a certain character; another might come in the form of a fake advertisement you might see in the alternate 1960s of *Team Fortress*.

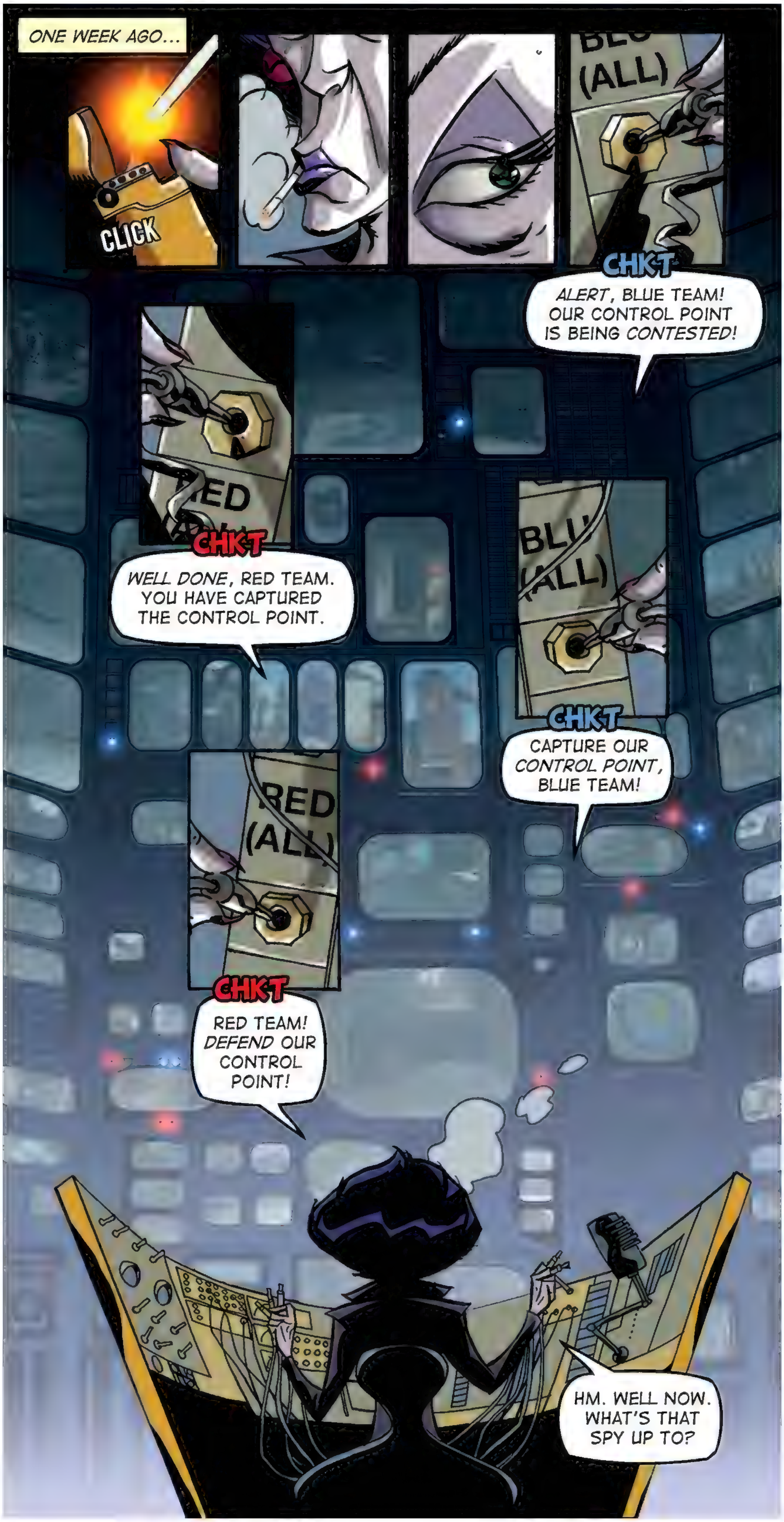
The update announcements have, over the years, become a staple of the updates themselves. They've included everything from animated shorts to extended magazine spoofs to, you guessed it, comics—all with the unintended side effect of expanding *TF2*'s backstory into the most absurdly convoluted in Valve's history.

Which brings us, finally, to why none of these stories have endings. When they originally appeared, the intent was only to *introduce* the story—the idea being that you, the player, would then hop into the updated game and resolve it yourself.

Are we suggesting, dear reader, that by not playing *Team Fortress 2* you're only getting half the story? No. We are explicitly stating it.

Reading is stupid and our game is free,
The *TF2* Team

WAR!


ONE WEEK AGO...
CLICK
(ALL)
CHKT
ALERT, BLUE TEAM! OUR CONTROL POINT IS BEING CONTESTED!
ED
CHKT
WELL DONE, RED TEAM. YOU HAVE CAPTURED THE CONTROL POINT.
BLU
(ALL)
CHKT
CAPTURE OUR CONTROL POINT, BLUE TEAM!
RED
(ALL)
CHKT
RED TEAM! DEFEND OUR CONTROL POINT!
HM. WELL NOW. WHAT'S THAT SPY UP TO?

CHKT ALERT!

A *RED SPY* IS IN THE BASE!

UNPLUG

A *RED SPY* IS IN THE *BASE?*

UGH.

THE *SCOUT*, YOU IDIOTS.

HE'S DISGUISED AS THE *SCOUT*.

IS THERE A *PROBLEM*, MISS PAULING?

UM.

WHAT... MAKES YOU SAY--

BECAUSE YOU'RE *HOVERING*. AND YOU ONLY HOVER WHEN THERE'S A *PROBLEM*.

LET'S HAVE IT.

WE DID A BACKGROUND CHECK ON THE MERCENARIES.

STANDARD PROTOCOL, NOTHING--

SOMETIME *TODAY*, PLEASE.

UM.

IT'S THE... BLUE SOLDIER AND RED DEMOMAN.

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE BECOME...

...*FRIENDS*, ADMINISTRATOR.

TWITCH

FOR HOW LONG?

HOW DID WE NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS?

WITHIN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, ADMINISTRATOR.

AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THEY MET AT A PROJECTILE WEAPONS EXPO.

IT, UH... SEEMS TO HAVE BLOSSOMED INTO A LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP.

HEH. YOU KNOW, FORGETTING FOR A MINUTE THAT WE DON'T CONDONE FRIENDSHIP, IT'S SORT OF...

ALMOST...

UH...

REPREHENSIBLE. TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY REPREHENSIBLE.

WE ARE IN AGREEMENT, MISS PAULING.

THIS FRIENDSHIP IS A *PROFOUND* BETRAYAL OF OUR TRUST.

WHY, FRIENDS COULD EASILY...

COULD...

HM.

MISS PAULING, YOU STRIKE ME AS THE SORT OF PERSON WHO WOULD HAVE *FRIENDS*.

TELL ME...

WHAT DO THEY *DO*?

UM. GO SKATING...

LOOK AT GUN CATALOGS...

SOMETIMES WE JUST *TALK*...

TALKING? FRIENDSHIP IS EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.

NO, THIS WON'T DO AT ALL.

IF THEY TALK, MISS PAULING, THEY MIGHT TALK ABOUT WORK.

AND IF THEY TALK ABOUT WORK...

THEY MIGHT TALK ABOUT US.

THIS IS WHAT WE WILL DO.

CALL MISTER HALE.

TELL HIM THAT WE HAVE SOME CUSTOM ORDERS FOR HIM.

TELL HIM MONEY IS NO OBJECT.

AND TELL HIM WE NEED THEM *RIGHT NOW.*

YES, MA'AM. ANYTHING ELSE?

OPEN CHANNELS TO OUR TWO NEW BEST FRIENDS.

I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR EACH OF THEM.

IN MY EXPERIENCE, MISS PAULING, NOTHING KILLS A FRIENDSHIP FASTER...

...THAN A *HEALTHY COMPETITION.*

SIR, YOU SHOULDN'T JUMP YET! WE'RE TOO LOW! IT'S NOT *SAFE!*

I KNOW THE RISKS, JERRY! BUT I'VE GOT *DAMN GOOD MEN* DOWN THERE WHO NEED ME!

TELL *THEM* IT'S NOT SAFE ENOUGH!

BUT SIR, I-- I CAN *CLIMB* TO A SAFE ALTITUDE.

IT WILL LITERALLY TAKE SECONDS, IF YOU'LL JUST--

TELL THOSE *MEN DOWN THERE* YOU CAN "CLIMB TO A SAFE ALTITUDE"!

ME, I'D RATHER GET DOWN THERE AND TELL THEM MYSELF...

...WITH *MY BARE HANDS!*

AT LEAST TAKE THE BACKUP PARACHUTE!

THERE'S PROBABLY NO TIME!

BRAVE JUMP!

READER, IF YOU THOUGHT THE *FIRST TWO PAGES* OF MY COMIC CONTAINED TOO MUCH BARE-KNUCKLE EXCITEMENT, THEN GET READY TO HAVE YOUR *EYES BREAK* FROM WIDENING IN SURPRISE AND YOUR COMIC-HOLDING HANDS *FALL OFF YOUR VERY ARMS* WHEN YOU GET A LOOK AT THE REST OF THIS ACTION-PACKED ISH, STARRING ME...

SAXTON HAAAALE!

IF THIS SENSATIONAL ISSUE DOESN'T STOP YOUR ADRENALINE-GORGED HEART FOR *FIVE ENTIRE SECONDS*, I WILL SEND YOU A NOTARIZED CERTIFICATE CONFIRMING *YOU DO NOT EXIST!*

HOW AM I SO SURE? I HAVE *SELF-CONFIDENCE!* ALSO, JUST THREE PAGES FROM NOW, I WILL BEAT UP A *PARKING LOT FULL OF HIPPIES.* I CERTAINLY WOULD'T BLAME YOU IF YOU SKIP AHEAD! FOR THE REST OF YOU, READ ON AS I...

...BARREL ROLL DIRECTLY INTO MY OFFICE AT MANN CO. HEADQUARTERS!

MR. BIDWELL! HOW DID MY LANDING COMPARE TO YESTERDAY'S?

BE FRANK WITH ME, NOW. I'M MADE OF STERN STUFF.

HUP! HUP!

HAHRUP!

FLAWLESS ROLL!

TEARS WERE BROUGHT TO THE EYES, SIR.

YOUR BREAKFAST STEAK.

IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT STEAK OF THE DAY, BIDWELL.

MR. REDDY! HOW'S ACCOUNTS?

YOU'RE NOW THE SIXTH RICHEST MAN IN AMERICA, MR. HALE.

NOM NOM NOM

TOP DRAWER! SEND THE OTHER FIVE A CONGRATULATORY BOUQUET AND MY "YOU'RE A DEAD MAN" FORM LETTER.

WHAT'S NEXT?

THERE'S A GROUP OF HIPPIES PROTESTING IN THE PARKING LOT AGAIN...

GUNS, SIR. THEY'RE AGAINST THEM.

THE *SCOUNDRELS!* WHAT HAVE THEY GOT THEIR SMELLY PONYTAILS IN A TWIST ABOUT *THIS* TIME?

FINE. I'LL BEAT THEM TO DEATH WITH *MY BARE HANDS!*

TF INDUSTRIES IS HOLDING ON LINE ONE, SIR.

WHAT? WY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO, MAN! DON'T LEAVE *HELEN* ON HOLD!

HELENNNN! YOU CHAIN-SMOKING SEDUCTRESS!

DO YOU STILL LIKE STEAK DINNERS AND SEX WITH HANDSOME MEN?

MISTER HALE, THIS IS MISS PAULING. I WORK FOR MISS--

EXCELLENT! MY OFFER STILL STANDS! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MISS PAULING?

WE NEED TO RESEOLVE A, UH...

...PERSONNEL PROBLEM.

WE WERE HOPING YOU COULD PROVIDE THE INCENTIVES.

OPEN!

IT JUST SO HAPPENS MY BOYS IN R AND D SENT UP A FEW CRATES OF ***HIGHLY EXPERIMENTAL NEW ORDINANCE*** THEY WANTED ME TO TAKE FOR A TEST DRIVE.

WHY DON'T I SEND *THOSE* OVER? HOLD ON, BIDWELL'S GESTURING FRANTICALLY TO ME ABOUT SOMETHING...

SIR, THOSE WERE THE WEAPONS YOU ASKED US TO SEND UP SO YOU COULD ***DESTROY*** THEM BEFORE THE SENATE INVESTIGATION.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE-- OOO, RIGHT. THAT POOR MONKEY.

WELL, NEVERMIND THAT. HELPING HELEN OUT'S MORE IMPORANT.

ALSO GETTING SOMEONE ELSE'S FINGERPRINTS ON THESE THINGS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I WON'T LIE TO YOU BIDWELL, WE ARE IN A *LOT* OF TROUBLE HERE.

MISS PAULING, STILL THERE?

UM...I HEARD ***EVERYTHING*** YOU SAID, MISTER HALE.

FANNNNTASTIC. AND?

WE'LL TAKE THEM.

PROBLEM SOLVED!

MR. REDDY! WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOME AMBULANCES!

MR. BIDWELL! I NEED AN ALIBI THAT PUTS ME ANYWHERE BUT THE PARKING LOT FOR THE NEXT SEVEN MINUTES!

THROW

LET'S GO KILL SOME HIPPIES!

THE DAY AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET... MEMORIALIZED FOREVER WITH THESE MANN CO. COMMEMORATIVE PLATES!

Poopy Joe
"Taken Too Soon"

Where were **YOU** the day American monkeynaut Poopy Joe was just moments away from being launched into space at the **DOME OF THE HEAVENS**—long thought by the government's top astrologists to be the **BARRIER** between our world and **BEYOND?** Our lawyers will tell you where **WE** were: nowhere near the launch site, and having **NOTHING WHATSOEVER** to do with the tragic explosion that occurred moments later.

America's dream of conquering space may have died that day... but **YOUR** dream of owning plates **COMMEMORATING** that dream will live on forever!

EACH MANN CO. COMMEMORATIVE PLATE LOVINGLY DEPICTS A MANN CO. TOOL POOPY JOE WOULD HAVE USED IN ACTUAL SPACE!

The *PICKAXE* Poopy Joe would have used to *PIERCE* the *VAULT OF HEAVEN* itself!

The *GIANT SWORD* Poopy Joe would have used to fight off Soviet monkeynaut Vladimir Bananas! How do you like the taste of *AMERICAN STEEL*, comrade?

The tiny *BUGLE* we gave him to blow on in case he got in trouble, so that we could launch *ANOTHER MONKEY INTO SPACE* to help him!

If you order now, we'll include a bonus plate showing the *EXPLOSION* of his capsule. Try to imagine it reflected in the *TEAR-STAINED EYE OF AN EAGLE!*

LARATE... THE SUPER-FAST KARATE!

Larate is a centuries-old Oriental art sped up fast so it is even more dangerous. Your arms and legs and head will be atom-age super-weapons. No man will dare attack you, and no woman dare love you for fear of accidental "bedroom" death. Larate Kit includes Super-Speed, Super-Attacks, Super-Kicks and Super-Larate Costume. Send $1.06 to PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ

"I would recommend this... if I wasn't so SCARED!"

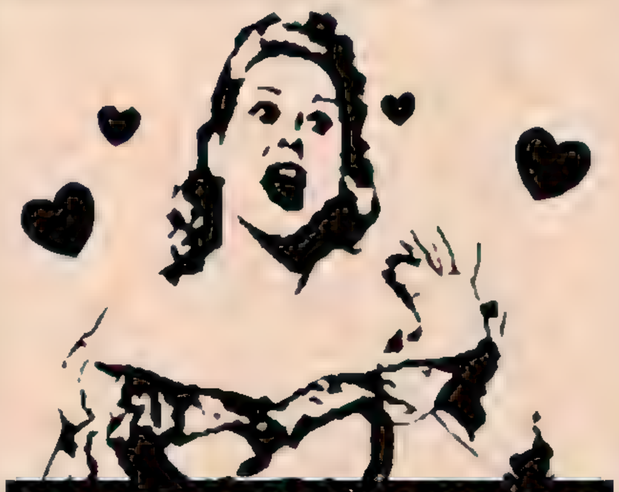
ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO OWN FLORIDA?

Lots of people TALK about OWNING FLORIDA, but few have the GRIT to step up and TAKE it. Send $550,000 to PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ

TAKE THE LIFE OF FRED ASTAIRE

WITH THIS ROCKET LAUNCHER

Transfer his fame to you!!!!
PO Box 857, Saratoga NJ



SCARE HER INTO LOVING YOU

With the How-to-Date Book Series! Includes: Gorilla Mask, Fake Hospital Chart (Says "Diabetes" on it), Novelty Defibrillator, Styrofoam Tombstone (Put your name on it... or HERS!), Break-Away Noose. Write to BOX 857, Saratoga NJ

BADLANDS, NEW MEXICO

FOR THE LAST *TIME*, MUM. I DON'T *HAVE* TO GO TO WORK. IT'S ME MORNING OFF.

"MORNING OFF"? OH, LORD HELP ME, YOU'VE BEEN *FIRED*. I KNEW IT.

SIGH NO, MUM. IT'S JUST THE ONE MORNIN'.

OH, WELL, THAT'S *FINE* THEN, I'M SURE.

I JUST WISH YOUR POOR OL' DA COULD TAKE A MORNING OFF. FROM *SPINNIN' IN HIS GRAVE AT YOUR IDLENESS!*

I'M HOLDIN' DOWN *THREE JOBS*, MUM.

THREE JOBS! HA! LISTEN TO HIM!

TAVISH, YOUR FATHER, GOD REST HIM, HAD *TWENTY-SIX* JOBS AND HE STILL FOUND THE TIME TO TEACH YOU THE FAMILY TRADE!

I MADE FIVE MILLION DOLLARS LAST YEAR, MUM. WE LIVE IN A MANSION.

AYE, AND WHO *TOLD* YOU TO BUY A BLOODY MANSION, I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

THESE'RE YOUR *PRIME EARNING YEARS.* YOU'RE HALFWAY TO RETIREMENT ALREADY.

MARK ME, BOY: NO DEMOMAN WORTH HIS SULFUR EVER HAD AN EYE IN HIS HEAD PAST *THIRTY!*

MM-HM. TEA'S UP, MUM.

IT WASN'T *EASY* BRINGING YOU UP SCOTTISH, LAD.

LEAN YEARS. IN THOSE DAYS YOU COULD BOMB MERCS *ALL DAY* AND STILL NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOR A LOAF OF BREAD.

YER DA WALKED FIFTEEN MILES IN THE RAIN TO BLOW UP THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND FOR A *NICKEL!*

I'LL GET MORE JOBS, MUM. I PROMISE.

I JUST HATE TO SEE YOU SQUANDERING YOUR GIFTS.

I KNOW, MUM.

I MISS HIM, TAVISH. EVERY DAY.

I KNOW, MUM.

KNOCK KNOCK

BLOODY HELL, ME ONE MORNIN' OFF...

DRINK YOUR TEA, MUM. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

MISTER DEGROOT?

TAVISH? WHO IS IT?

SOMEONE FROM WORK, MUM!

ASK HIM HAS HE GOT ANY MORE JOBS!

HERE, *I* KNOW YOU. YOU'RE THAT WEE LASS, WORKS WITH THE ANGRY LADY WHO'S ALWAYS SCREAMIN' AT US WHILE WE WORK.

SHE'S NOT SO BAD ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW HER.

REALLY. AND WHAT'S SHE WANT, THEN?

SHE'D LIKE YOU TO KILL YOUR BEST FRIEND.

THE EYE [illegible]DER

IN EXCHANGE, WE'LL GIVE YOU *THIS*.

ARE YE SERIOUSLY ASKING ME TO BETRAY ME BEST MATE FOR A *WEAPON?*

HA! I'VE GOT A *LITTLE* MORE INTEGRITY THAN THAT, LASS. I...

CREAK

I...

OH MY.

WHAT'S *YOUR* NAME, YOU DIRTY GIRL?

SHING!
THIS... IS THE EYELANDER.
PATTERN-WELDED DAMASCUS STEEL.
HARMONICALLY BALANCED.
SLOW-FORGED FOR *GENERATIONS* IN THE BOWELS OF CAPTURED ENGLISH KINGS.
...headdddds...
WHOCK!
RRRAGHHH!
UM.
AND IT'S *HAUNTED.*

BLAST YE, WOMAN. MAKING A MAN CHOOSE BETWEEN HIS BEST FRIEND AND A SWORD.

ACH. NO. NO, I COULDN'T. SOLDIER'S ME BEST MATE.

TELL YOU WHAT. WHY DON'T I LEAVE THEM HERE, AND YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IT.

"THEM"?

I SHOULD GET GOING.

MANN CO.

MANN CO.

OH, AND MISTER DE-GROOT?

YOUR *FRIEND'S* EMPLOYERS MADE *HIM* THE SAME OFFER.

HE SAID *YES*, MISTER DEGROOT.

ENJOY YOUR MORNING OFF.

MISTER JANE DOE
NO SOLICITORS! DO NOT TEST ME
THIS IS THE PLACE.
HHT. FOR THE MONEY WE PAID YOU TO FIND IT, IT HAD BETTER BE.
YOU'RE WASTING MY TIME. GO KNOCK.
KNOCK KNOCK
GOOD.
NOW *DUCK*.

CH-CHOOM
CH-CHOOM

WHO IS IT?

SAY, FRIEND! WHY DON'T YOU COME TO THE PEEPHOLE SO I CAN *SEE* YOU?

THAAAT'S IT. DON'T BE SCARED. I JUST WANT TO--

HUTTAH, NECK SNAP!

TOK TOK

ALRIGHT, YOU CAN COME IN.

UNLOCK
UNLOCK
UNLOCK
UNLOCK
UNLOCK
UNLOCK
UNLOCK

100 CANS
CAPTAIN DAN'S
100 CANS
CAPTAIN DAN'S
UNLESS YOU'RE THE *TOMATO SOUP WHOLESALER* OR A *NEW DELIVERY MAN* FROM THE RIB PLACE...
...YOU HAVE JUST ENTERED A *DOORWAY OF HURT* INTO AN *APARTMENT OF PAIN*, SON.
THE RIB PLACE
GUNS AN
HAIRCUT
MAGAZIN

FLASH!
GOOD LORD NO!
TELL ME, MISTER DOE...
CLK
DO YOU KNOW WHAT A *CONFLICT OF INTEREST* IS?
CAN I GUESS?
NO.
YOU DON'T OWN ME! YOU JUST TRY AND *STOP* ME, LADY.
IT IS A FORM OF COMBAT!
NO.
A BREED OF DOG!
I'M AFRAID NOT.
IT IS KNOWING WHAT WORDS MEAN! *THESE ARE GUESSE*
MR. DOE. YOU HAVE BEFRIENDED A MAN WE ARE *PAYING YOU TO KILL.*
AS SUCH, YOU HAVE TWO OPTIONS. *ONE*: MY ASSOCIATES WILL DRIVE YOU TO THE NEAREST GRAVEL PIT...
OO! THAT ONE.
...WHERE THEY WILL *KILL* YOU FOR YOUR GROSS INSUBORDINATION.
WAIT. LET ME HEAR BOTH CHOICES FIRST.
OPTION *TWO*...
YOU KILL *THIS* MAN. AND WE SUPPLY *YOU* WITH THE *CUSTOM-BUILT WEAPONS* YOU'LL NEED TO GET THE JOB DONE.

THEN I GUESS YOU'D BETTER TAKE ME TO THE GRAVEL PIT AND *SHOOT* ME, LADY.

'CAUSE IF YOU EVER ASK ME TO KILL MY FRIEND AGAIN, I WILL PUT *MY BOOT SO FAR UP YOUR ASS* IT WILL BE ON THE *NEWS*.

INTERESTING. THAT'S NOT THE OPTION *HE* TOOK.

HE AGREED TO KILL ME FOR WEAPONS? *HA!* I DON'T BUY IT, SISTER.

LISTEN FOR YOURSELF.

BZZT I-WILL-KILL-THE-SOLDIER. *BZZT*

BZZT HE-IS-A-BAD-FRIEND. *BZZT*

AHHHH, BUT *DAMMIT* IT DOESN'T MATTER *WHAT* HE SAID IN THAT WEIRD ROBOT VOICE I'VE NEVER HEARD HIM TALK IN BEFORE.

ONCE YOU'VE TAKEN A MAN OUT FOR WHISKEY AND RIBS... THEN *FOUGHT* HIM... THEN FOUGHT THE *POLICE* WITH HIM...

WELL, YOU HAVE FORGED A BOND THICKER THAN ANY SOUP YOU CAN BUY.

THAT'S NOT GIRL TALK, EITHER.

THAT IS JUST *FACTS*.

NO DEAL, PUMPKIN. FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER PATSY.

BZZT HE-IS-NOT-A-REAL-SOLDIER. *BZZT*

BZZT HE-WAS-NOT-EVEN-IN-THE-ARMY. *BZZT*

BZZT HE-IS-A-FRAUD. *BZZT*

BZZT HE-IS-A-CIVILIAN. *BZZT*

CIV... CIVILIAN?

HE PROMISED HE'D NEVER...

HOW *DARE* HE? I EARNED EVERY *ONE* OF THOSE MEDALS I MADE! I DID *THREE* GODDAMN TOURS OF DUTY OVERSEAS, AND I WASN'T EVEN *ASKED!* I *PAID* MY DUES! *AND* MY PLANE TICKET OVER!

I..

HE...

HE IS A DEAD MAN!

I BELIEVE WE HAVE A DEAL, MR. DOE.

THERE WILL BE A NEW WEAPON WAITING FOR YOU EVERY DAY UNTIL THE JOB IS DONE.

THE FIRST WEAPON WE'LL BE SENDING YOU IS A *PRECISION INSTRUMENT.*

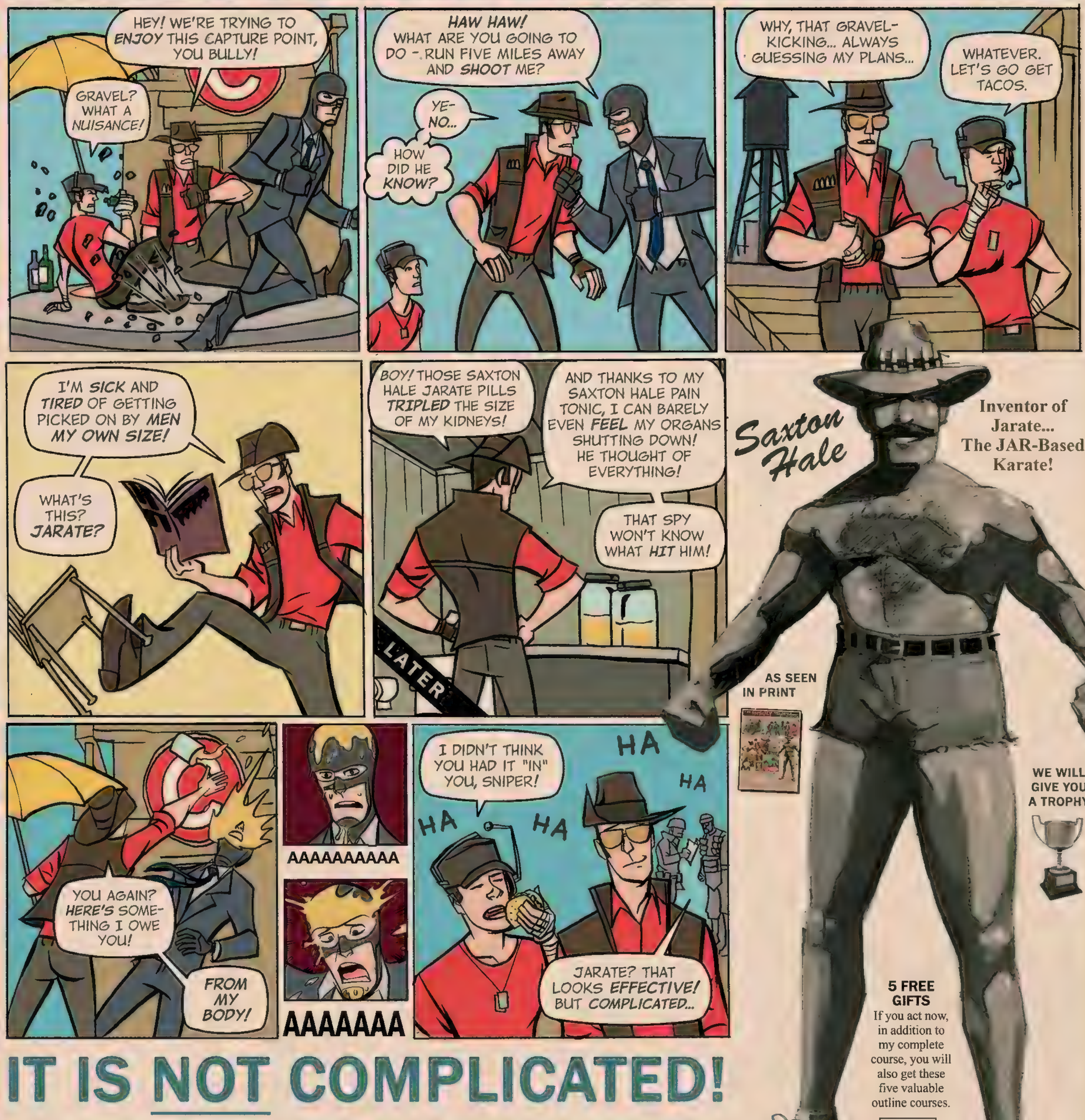
IF YOU WERE BLASTING AROUND RANDOMLY, IT WOULD BE USELESS TO YOU.

HOWEVER, I THINK YOU'LL FIND IT USEFUL FOR SHARP-SHOOTING... *SPECIFIC ENEMIES.*

OKAY. YOU STILL WANT ME TO KILL THE DEMOMAN, THOUGH, RIGHT?

PAULING, KILL THE FEED, PLEASE.

THE INSULT THAT MADE A "JARATE MASTER" OUT OF SNIPER



IT IS NOT COMPLICATED!

How do I know? I am from AUSTRALIA! And the events dramatized in the comic above actually happened... TO ME! Remember that part between panels four and five? That was not time lapse magic! I kicked a chair across the room, and seconds later I knew Jarate! NOW YOU CAN TOO!

WHAT IS JARATE?

Jarate causes your enemies to lose the WILL TO LIVE and take more damage from incoming fire! You may say, "But I don't HAVE any enemies!" Well, do you have FRIENDS? Are they on FIRE? Right NOW? Jarate them to a non-on fire state INSTANTLY! Being on fire is horrible! They'll never want to talk about your Jarate rescue ever again, but you'll have their secret undying gratitude!

Your enemies will wish they could forget their encounter with Jarate! Too bad! The IMMEDIATE EFFECTS are temporary. As the first damp moment stretches into months, however — as years become long, regret-filled decades, Jarate reveals its TRUE POWER: forcing your enemies to accept a terrifying new existence, where people do awful things to them ALL THE TIME for NO REASON and DIGNITY DOES NOT EXIST.

They will think about Jarate at their weddings — at their high school reunions — witnessing the birth of their first beautiful child — Jarate will haunt their every waking moment for the REST OF THEIR LIVES.

TWO- FISTED NON-CANON ADVENTURE

MANN CO.

20¢ | #1 MAR

SAXTON HALE'S CORPORATE TALES

MAC

DUSTBOWL. YESTERDAY.
I CANNOT BELIEVE OUR GUNS BREAK IN MIDDLE OF BATTLE. AGAIN.
IN AMERICA, COMRADE, WE DO NOT BLAME THE TOOL. WE BLAME THE MAN.
I BLAME A MANN ALRIGHT. MANN CO. THIS STUFF IS JUNK!
SERIOUSLY, LOOK AT THIS! MY EARPIECE MELTED INSIDE MY SKULL HERE!
THAT'S LIKE THREE TIMES NOW!
LADIES, CLEARLY I CANNOT TALK TO YOU AS I WOULD MEN.
SO I WILL SUGARCOAT THIS WITH YOUR FANCY COLLEGE TALK.
EITHER WE FIND A JUST-IN-TIME SOLUTION TO RESYNERGIZE OUR PARADIGM, OR WE WILL BE THINKING INSIDE THE BOX.
SIX FEET UNDER THE GROUND.
HOLY CRAP! HEY FELLAS, LOOK AT THIS!
WAS... WAS THAT THERE YESTERDAY?
IS SO WHITE...
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KINDA HOSPITAL FOR FRUIT!
HEY THERE, GUYS!
MY NAME'S TRENT! THIS IS JESSICA!
HI YOU GUYS! LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, OKAY?

GIRL!

I GOT THIS ONE, GUYS.

HI! CAN I

GUESS WHO WAS JUST IN A BATTLE? DON'T BOTHER GUESSIN', 'CAUSE IT WAS ME! SEE THIS BLOOD? I GOT ***NO IDEA*** WHOSE IT IS! NOT ***MINE***, ANYWAY! YEAH-HA! WELL, MOST OF IT. THE BLOOD COMIN' OUT OF MY HEAD'S MINE. YOU GOT ANY WIRELESS HEADSETS YOU COULD SHOW ME?

WE, UH... HAVE ONE RIGHT THERE!

AH.

YOU MEAN THIS ONE...

HERE?

NNF

FLEX

ADMIT ONE GUN SHOW 052005

I... DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

ARE YOU FLEXING?

WHAT? NNGH! NO.

MUST... FLEX.... HARDER.

PAINFUL FLEX

I WAS JUST... *RRG!* CASUALLY POINTING AT THIS HEADSET.

THIS IS MY... *RNGF!* NATURAL POINTING STANCE.

OH. OKAY. ANYWAY, THAT'S IT THERE. YOU FOUND IT.

YEAH I DID.

HEH. OL' FLEXY. NEVER FAILS.

...AND THE BULLETS BIODEGRADE ONCE THEY HIT FLESH, LEAVING NOTHING BEHIND BUT A BLOG POST.

BULLET WILL UPDATE BLOG WITH KILL COUNT?

IN *REAL TIME,* SIR!

I DO NOT HAVE BLOG.

THE BULLETS ARE PROGRAMMED TO SET ONE UP FOR YOU!

I *LIKE* THIS GUN.

JUDASES!

I HAVE USED THIS MANN CO. SHOVEL FOR TWELVE YEARS!

IT DOES NOT BLOG! IT DOES NOT BIODEGRADE! *IT BARELY DIGS HOLES!*

BUT IT IS MINE AND AGGGGH IT IS ON FIRE!

FOOM!

UH OH! LET ME TAKE CARE OF THAT FOR YOU, SIR!

BAH! THIS SHOVEL BURSTS INTO FLAME SO OFTEN MY HAND IS A FIREPROOF MASS OF SCAR TISSUE!

YOU HIPPIES HAVE NOTHING THAT I NEED!

YOU'LL LIKE THIS, SIR.

I WILL NOT! KEEP PUSHING ME, SISTER, AND I WILL PLANT MY CARBON FOOTPRINT SO FAR UP YOUR *IS THAT A PIG?*

YEP! YOU JUST PLUG IT INTO THE FIREWIRE PORT.

IS THAT PIG *COOKING?*

DING!

ALREADY COOKED! WHO WANTS BACON, RIBS, PORK CHOPS AND HAM?

YES, YES, I DO, AND YES.

STOP...

...RIGHT THERE!

PROPERTY DAMAGE!

THE NAME'S SAXTON HALE! AUSTRALIAN! CEO OF MANN CO! AND THE MAN WHO'S GONNA *BURN THIS PLACE TO THE GROUND!*

I MAKE *SQUARE, UNSAFE PRODUCTS FOR MEN!* NOT WHITE LITTLE EGG THINGS WITH NO SHARP EDGES AND ONLY *ONE BUTTON!*

LOOK AT THIS TINY THING! IT'S NOT ON FIRE! HOW DO YOU EVEN KNOW IT'S *ON?*

BRAVE PRESS!

HA! MYSTERIOUS BUTTON, YOU JUST GOT PRESSED BY *SAXTON HALE!*

LIVE

THIS JUST IN! SOMEONE HAS BLOWN UP THE MOON!

...HOPE YOU HAD THE TI-II-IME OF YOUR LIFE....

UP NEXT...

THE MOON: Taken Too Soon

ENH?

THAT'S OUR NEWEST PRODUCT. THE IBLEWUPTHEMOON.

ARE YOU SAYING... I JUST...?

YEP!

WELL, THAT IS FANTASTIC.

A BOLD NEW PLAN!

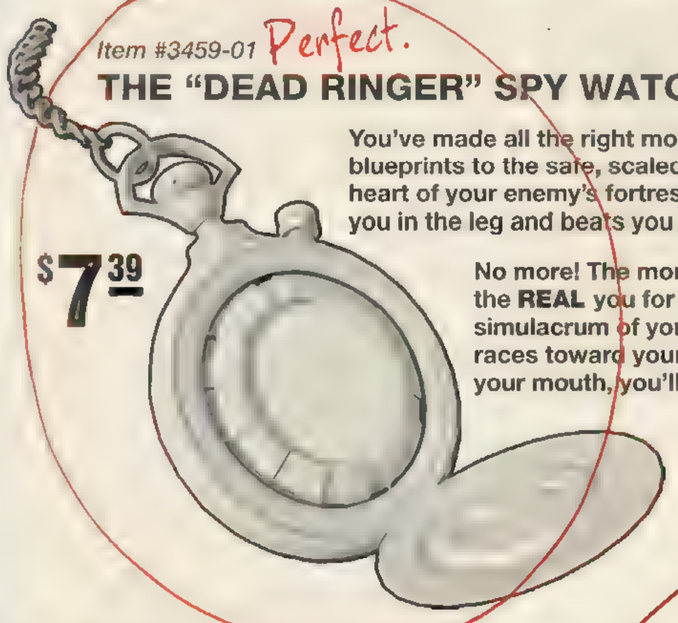
LET ME SEE YOUR MANAGER. BECAUSE I AM BUYING YOUR COMPANY.

NO SALE, HALE!

YOU! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! THIS PLACE HAS YOUR CURVY STINK ALL OVER IT!

NEXT ISSUE! WHEN TITANS CLASH!

DAPPER ROGUE ~ The Catalogue for the Gentleman Scoundrel



Item #3459-01 Perfect.

THE "DEAD RINGER" SPY WATCH

$7.39

You've made all the right moves—conducted weeks of reconnaissance, stolen the blueprints to the safe, scaled the sheer mountain wall and penetrated deep into the heart of your enemy's fortress in disguise. Then some mouth-breathing guard shoots you in the leg and beats you to death with your own ski mask.

No more! The moment you receive a non-lethal hit, the Dead Ringer cloaks the **REAL** you for up to **EIGHT SECONDS** while creating a realistic simulacrum of your grisly death and limp corpse. By the time your adversary races toward your "body" to frisk you for cash and pull gold fillings out of your mouth, you'll already be behind him, poised for the killing blow.

Note to self. Get these express mailed.

Item #3459-02

THE "CLOAK AND DAGGER" SPY WATCH

$5.65

All historians agree that George Washington's greatest regret was not being **PERMANENTLY INVISIBLE**. Now you can succeed where the man who invented America failed. Be invisible forever with the Cloak and Dagger Spy Watch!

"Liar!" owners of our classic Cloak Device may be yelling. "When I'm invisible my power is *constantly* draining!" Not with the Cloak and Dagger. So long as you stand still, your cloak will **REGENERATE INDEFINITELY**. Only movement drains its power.

But attention, fans of picking up metal objects: The Cloak and Dagger is **ONLY** powered by standing still.

Could use this.

No.

Item #3459-03

MACROFILM SUIT

$9.98

These days, who *doesn't* know to look for microfilm? But watch them **WALK RIGHT PAST** your macrofilm suit. Hide in plain sight! Here is the trick: **NOBODY** expects microfilm to be big. That is the trick.

Ridiculous.

Item #3459-08

CAMERA BEARD

$4.12

Is it a beard? Or is it a camera? No one will guess that it is both! Great for infiltrating lumber yards, Canada, and strongman competitions.

Ugh.

CAPE AND GLOVES

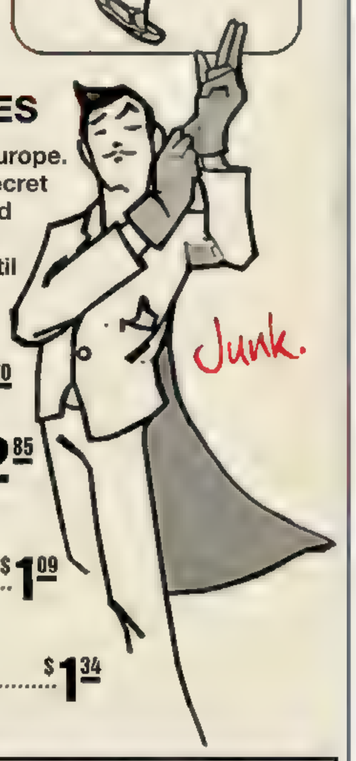
Walk undetected through Europe. Take pictures of their top secret castles, windmills, cafes and brothels. They won't know you are not from Europe until it's too late—it is the **PERFECT CRIME**.

Item #34109-014
Silk Cape..... $3.70

Item #34109-015
Silk Gloves..... $2.85

Item #34109-016
Silk shopping bag with realistic-looking baguette sticking out of it..... $1.09

Item #34109-015
Unsettlingly thin glue-on moustache..... $1.34



Junk.

CLEARANCE

ALL ITEMS 47¢

TRUTH SERUM CIGARETTES
There is no one who does not like to smoke. 100% effective on everyone.

UNDERWATER HYPNOPEN
Hypnotize sharks. Write on them. It works!

FLAMETHROWER LIGHTER
Keep separate from your regular lighter! It deceives!

CRAB-WALKING KIT
It will change your skeleton! Excruciatingly painful but worth it.

SKI MASK GRAPPLING HOOK
Mask unravels into rope. Grappling hook latches to back of skull.

FOR THE GAMBLER

$16.94

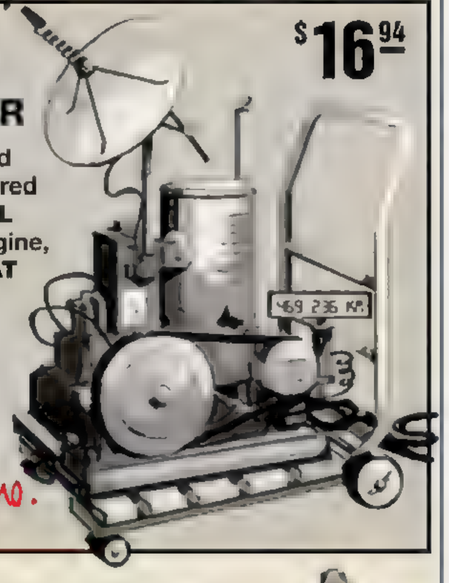
Item #3459-07

PORTABLE BACCARAT DETECTOR

Never miss another hand of the world's classiest card game! If there is a game of baccarat within two hundred miles of you, you will know. This **EASY-TO-CONCEAL** device is no larger or heavier than a standard car engine, and will detect any type of baccarat, from **BACCARAT CHEMIN DE FER** to **BACCARAT BANQUE.**

PLEASE NOTE:
The baccarat detector **DOES NOT** recognize punto banco as a form of baccarat. We're sure we do not have to tell you that Baccarat is to punto banco what a fine wine is to a toilet full of spoiled meat.

True. But no.



ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
3459 01	Dead Ringer Spy Watch	1
3459 02	Cloak+Dagger Spy Watch	1

"If you aren't 100% satisfied with our fine line of spy products, you can take it up with me!"

Saxton Hale
CEO, Australian

MANN CO.
WE SELL PRODUCTS AND GET IN FIGHTS
A DIVISION OF TF INDUSTRIES

PREPARING YOUNG WOMEN FOR A LIFE OF ACTION

MANN CO.

12¢ | #6 FEB

GIRL'S ADVENTURE

STARRING

SAXTON HALE

WHAT'S THE MATTER, GIRLS?

YOU WANNA LIVE FOREVER?

SCOUTMASTER HALE GIVES HIS SAXTONETTES A FIRE SAFETY TIP...

GRIZZLY BEARS BURN!

MISTER CONAGHER?

PRESENT DAY.

MISTER *MANN* WILL SEE YOU NOW.

YES, MA'AM.

SAY, UH... THAT AIN'T AN ORIGINAL *KICASSO*, IS IT?

WHAT AN *EXCELLENT* EYE YOU HAVE, MISTER CONAGHER.

IT IS. FROM HIS *"HUNTED IN THE JUNGLE"* PERIOD, I BELIEVE.

WHY DON'T YOU GO AHEAD AND CALL ME *DELL*, MA'AM.

"MISTER CONAGHER" WAS MY *GRANDFATHER'S* NAME.

YES. I REMEMBER.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MANNS, DELL?

FIRST I'VE HEARD HE *HAD* ONE, MA'AM.

RADIGAN CONAGHER WAS NOT A *CHATTY* MAN.

SIXTY YEARS AGO, YOUR GRANDFATHER SOLVED A RATHER... *SENSITIVE* PROBLEM FOR US.

WELL...

MAYBE "SOLVED" IS TOO STRONG A WORD.

BUT I'M SURE MISTER MANN WILL WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT HIMSELF.

OH!

ONE LAST THING.

EVEN IF HE *OFFERS*...

DO NOT SHAKE HIS HAND.

HE FORGETS SOMETIMES.

1850.

"...TO MY DEAREST MAIDSERVANT EMILY, I, *ZEPHENIAH MANN**, LEAVE THE REST AND RESIDUE OF MY ESTATE..."

"...TO MY FAITHFUL AIDE AND TRACKER, *BARNABAS HALE* OF THE SAVAGE AUSTRALIAS, I DIVEST COMPLETE CONTROL OF *MANN CO.* AND--"

* SEE ISSUE 97!

SKIP ME FOR NOW, MAYOR!

I LIKE THIS COUGAR'S *PEPPER SAUCE!*

COUGAR!

"...TO MY LAYABOUT, BRAIN DEFECTIVE SONS, *BLUTARCH AND REDMOND*, I LEAVE THE GREATEST CURSE OF ALL..."

"*PARTNERSHIP.*"

"WHAT *LAND* I HAVE PURCHASED IN THIS NEW WORLD IS TO BE *SPLIT EVENLY* BETWEEN YOU BOTH."

"YOU HAVE WASTED YOUR *LIVES* BICKERING OVER NOTHING."

"AND SO I LEAVE YOU DIMWITS SOMETHING OF *CONSEQUENCE* OVER WHICH TO FEUD."

1890.

MISTER CONAGHER, I'M TOLD YOU ARE A MAN OF MANY IDEAS AND FEW WORDS.

SO I'LL GET TO THE POINT.

FORTY YEARS AGO, MY BROTHER AND I INHERITED A ***CONSIDERABLE*** PARCEL OF LAND.

TO ***SHARE.***

NATURALLY, I ASSEMBLED A TEAM OF THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST ***MERCENARIES*** TO TAKE IT ALL BY FORCE.

WHAT I DID ***NOT*** EXPECT WAS THAT ***MY*** IDIOT BROTHER WOULD THINK TO DO THE ***SAME.***

MY TEN-MINUTE LAND GRAB BECAME AN INTRACTABLE ***STALEMATE.***

THE SOLUTION?

IF I COULD NOT ***TAKE*** ***MY*** BROTHER'S LAND...

I WOULD SIMPLY ***OUTLAST*** HIM FOR IT.

LOOK AT MY HANDS, MISTER CONAGHER.

I HAVE NEVER WORKED A *DAY IN MY LIFE* WITH THEM. THEY ARE THE SMOOTH HANDS OF A *BABY*.

I HAVE MOUNTED AN *EPIC CAMPAIGN OF LEISURE* AGAINST THE RAVAGES OF TIME.

WAITING FOR *NATURE* TO DO TO MY BROTHER WHAT MY MEN COULD *NOT*.

AND YET HERE WE ARE AT THE END.

AND HE...

WON'T...

DIE.

I *MUST* OUTLIVE MY BROTHER.

AND *YOU* MUST BUILD ME A MACHINE TO DO IT.

GOD WANTS ME *DEAD*, MISTER CONAGHER. AND WE ARE GOING TO *DEFY* HIM.

MAKE ME
A MONSTER.
ALRIGHT.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE IN THE *RAIN*, MISTER CONAGHER.

COME *IN*. YOU'RE SOAKED TO THE *BONE*, POOR THING.

WHO—

IT WILL SAVE US BOTH A LOT OF TIME IF YOU DON'T ASK WHO I AM OR HOW I KNOW WHAT I KNOW.

WHO I *AM* DOES NOT CONCERN YOU.

WHAT I *KNOW* IS THAT YOU'VE AGREED TO BUILD BLUTARCH MANN A MACHINE THAT WILL PROLONG HIS LIFE INDEFINITELY.

YES MA'AM.

MISTER CONAGHER, COULD I POSSIBLY CONVINCE YOU *NOT* TO BUILT THIS MACHINE?

NO MA'AM.

NO. I DIDN'T THINK SO.

SO LET ME PROPOSE AN *ALTERNATIVE*.

FOR THE LAST FORTY YEARS THE AUSTRALIANS HAVE *OUTPACED THE WORLD* IN TECHNOLOGY.

AND THIS IS CONFOUNDING, SINCE BY ALL APPEARANCES THEY ARE A NATION OF *IDIOTS*.

TELEPORTATION. CLOAKING. THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF THE *MOUSTACHE* SCIENCES.

EVERY ONE OF MANKIND'S INNOVATIONS NOW COMES FROM THE LAGER-PICKLED BRAIN OF AN AUSTRALIAN.

BECAUSE OF *THIS*.

GOLD?

NOT GOLD, MISTER CONAGHER. *AUSTRALIUM*.

UH HUH. WHY'S THERE A PICTURE OF A MAN BOXIN' A KANGAROO ON IT?

IT'S HOW THEY CHOOSE THEIR KING. AS I SAID. IDIOTS.

IDIOTS RATHER ACCIDENTALLY ***STRANDED*** ATOP THE PLANET'S ONLY DEPOSIT OF A ***TRANSFORMATIVE NEW ELEMENT***.

THEY'RE FANATICALLY SECRETIVE ABOUT IT. BUT I'VE SPENT THE LAST DECADE *HUNTING* IT, OUNCE BY OUNCE.

I'VE MANAGED TO AMASS A HUNDRED POUNDS. IT'S *YOURS*.

THINK, MISTER CONAGHER—IF THIS ELEMENT CAN MAKE A GENIUS OUT OF AN *AUSTRALIAN*...

...WHAT WOULD IT DO FOR A MAN OF *YOUR* FACULTIES?

USE IT TO BUILD BLUTARCH MANN HIS IMMORTALITY MACHINE, IF YOU MUST. ALL I ASK...

...IS THAT YOU BUILD ONE FOR *REDMOND* MANN AS WELL.

PRESENT DAY.

AND THEN WHAT DO YOU THINK MY *RAT-STINK TWIN BROTHER* DID?

HE BUILT ONE *TOO, THAT'S WHAT!*

I'M NO CLOSER TO BEATING HIM THAN I WAS A *HUNDRED YEARS AGO!*

AND WHAT'S WORSE, YOUR *LUMMOX OF A GRANDFATHER* DIDN'T EVEN BUILD IT RIGHT! THIS INFERNAL THING IS A *LEMON!*

I'VE BARELY CHEATED DEATH OUT OF A *HALF-CENTURY* WITH THIS PILE OF JUNK AND IT'S ALREADY BREAKING DOWN!

THE WAY I SEE IT, HE WAS *YOUR* GRANDFATHER! AND YOU'RE ON *MY* PAYROLL!

FIX IT!

SIR, I'M, UH... *FLATTERED* Y'ALL'D THINK OF ME, BUT I HAVE *NO IDEA* HOW TO FIX THIS.

HELL, IF I TOUCH IT IT'D PROBABLY *KILL* YA.

WHAT IF YOU HAD ACCESS TO YOUR GRANDFATHER'S BLUEPRINTS?

WELL NOW, *THAT'S* A DIFFERENT STORY.

HEH. NOT MUCH HOP'A THAT, THOUGH. THE OLD AN HAD 'EM--

--BURIED WITH HIM.

FUMMPH

YES, YES, I DUG UP YOUR GRANDFATHER AND LOOTED HIS CORPSE.

IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, THOSE SCRIBBLINGS HAVE BEEN THE *BANE* OF MY EXISTENCE FOR SIXTY YEARS.

I'VE SPENT A *SMALL FORTUNE* TRYING TO DECIPHER THEM.

GIBBERISH. EVERY LAST PAGE.

YOU MAY *BORROW* IT.

ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU

UH... SIR?

IS HE ALRIGHT?

GIVE HIM A MOMENT, DEAR.

HE'S JUST DEAD.

...RRRRRRAGGHHHHHHHH!
TIK
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ
EVERY DAY I'M DEAD A LITTLE *LONGER*, MISTER CONAGHER.
I HAVE ***SEEN*** THE OTHER SIDE.
THERE IS ***NOTHING*** THERE.
FIX. THIS. MACHINE.
I *APPRECIATE* THAT YOU'RE *MY* ***EMPLOYER***, AND AN OLD MAN BESIDES...
BUT IF YOU DON'T TAKE YOUR GODDAMN HANDS OFF ME I WILL BREAK YOU IN ***HALF***.
FEH.

"TAKE YOUR GRANDFATHER'S NOTES."

"DECIPHER THEM."

"LEARN HOW TO FIX MY MACHINE."

"IF YOU FIND *ANYTHING* ELSE OF INTEREST..."

"REMEMBER..."

"IT'S *MINE.*"

LIFE EXTENDER MACHINE

GUNS

MAPS OF AUSTRALIA CACHES

"BRING IT *DIRECTLY* TO ME."

"DO *NOT* BUILD IT."

YOU WILL BELIEVE A SHARK CAN CRY

MANN CO.

12¢ | #55 MAR

SAXTON HALE'S THRILLING TALES

THE INDONESIAN BERZERKER SHARK-

MERCILESS....

DEADLY...

EXTINCT!

BIDWELL'S BIG PLAN

YOUR EYES DIDN'T DECEIVE YOU, READER! I -- ***SAXTON HALE*** --JUST HAD A ***DRAMATIC CONFRONTATION*** WITH MY NEMESIS AND FORMER MENTOR, ***CHARLES DARLING!***

THOSE ***OTHER*** ADVENTURE RAGS WOULD HAVE SAVED A GEM LIKE THAT FOR THE ***CLIMACTIC ENDING*** TO A FOUR-PART STORY! ***NOT HERE!*** AT MANN CO., WE KNOW YOUR TIME IS ***PRECIOUS.*** ONLY WETNURSES AND JAZZ GUITARISTS WANT TO SIT AROUND READING PAGE AFTER PAGE OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT JUST TO FIND OUT WHY PEOPLE ARE FIGHTING. ***OUR COMICS CUT RIGHT TO THE FIGHTS.*** HALF THE TIME EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M HITTING SOMETHING!

DARRRLING!

THE NEXT FEW PAGES HAVE MY ASSISTANTS BLATHERING ON ABOUT SOME NEW WAY TO BUY HATS. IF YOU'RE LIKE ME, YOU'LL WANT TO SKIP DIRECTLY TO PAGE SIX, WHERE I JUMP OUT OF A BUILDING AND SOCK IT TO SOME HIPPIES. WHY? I DON'T KNOW. AND I ***NEVER WILL.*** THAT'S A ***MANN CO. COMICS PROMISE.***

LUCKILY, I SPOT AN ENDANGERED EAGLE AS I FALL TOWARDS THE EARTH!

AHA!

I CAN USE THIS NOBLE CREATURE TO GLIDE SAFELY TO THE GROUND!

AWK

THIS TURNS OUT NOT TO BE THE CASE! INSTEAD, MY WEIGHT CAUSES THE EAGLE TO PLUMMET ALSO.

SMASH

...DIRECTLY THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT OF MY OFFICE AT *MANN CO. HEADQUARTERS!*

MISTER BIDWELL! MISTER REDDY! *MARVELLOUS* NEWS!

DO YOU REMEMBER MY OLD HUNTING TEACHER, CHARLES DARLING?

HE'S MY *NEMESIS* NOW!

AWK

I'LL ADD HIM TO THE LIST, SIR.

OH, I AM GOING TO BEAT THE *HELL* OUT OF HIM.

SIR?

WE HAVE A BIT OF AN EMERGENCY.

DAMN IT, BIDWELL, WHAT ARE YOU SCOWLING ABOUT?

HERE. HAVE AN EAGLE.

BRAWK!

THEY'RE ENDANGERED. IF ANYBODY ASKS WHERE YOU GOT IT, I WOULD JUST RUN.

SIR. IT'S ABOUT OUR CUSTOMERS.

WHAT? WHAT ARE THOSE WEEPING CRYBABIES SNIVELING ABOUT NOW?

OUR CUSTOMERS ARE DEMANDING *MORE*, SIR.

MORE WHAT? GUNS? CLOTHES? HATS? SCARS?

MORE *EVERYTHING*, SIR.

HORSERADISH! THEY'LL TAKE OUR CURRENT INVENTORY AND *LIKE* IT! CHEAPLY MADE, UNSAFE PRODUCTS THAT *CATCH ON FIRE!*

KEEP IN MIND, SIR, THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF NEW MANN CO. PRODUCTS, OUR CUSTOMERS *ARE* DESIGNING THEIR OWN.

NOT THE EQUAL OF THE MANN CO. BRAND, I'LL BET.

NO, SIR. THEY'RE *BETTER*.

OHHHHH, THEY ARE *DEAD MEN.*

THE CUSTOMER *IS* ALWAYS RIGHT, SIR.

THE CUSTOMER IS A ***DEAD MAN***, BIDWELL.

I ***DID*** HAVE A THOUGHT.

IF THEY'RE GOING TO BUILD ITEMS ANYWAY... WHY DON'T WE OFFER TO SELL THEM THROUGH MANN CO.?

OO! I LIKE IT.

WE COULD EVEN GIVE THEM A CUT OF THE PROFITS.

HA HA HA! WHAT?

WAIT! I JUST REALIZED I STOPPED CARING ABOUT THIS CONVERSATION FIVE MINUTES AGO. TAKE CARE OF IT, BIDWELL. I--

SNIFF SNIFF

PATCHOULI OIL...
ENTITLEMENT...
POSTER BOARD GLUE...
SMOOTH HANDS...

SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF

HIPPIES!

DEAR READER: YOU MADE THE *RIGHT CHOICE* SKIPPING AHEAD!

NOW, THIS FIGHT GOES ON FOR ANOTHER SIX PAGES, AND LET ME TELL YOU, I COME OFF LOOKING PRETTY DAMN GOOD IN IT.

HA HA HA HA HA

SPKSH!

NO!

ESPECIALLY ON THE FIFTH PAGE. OH, I REALLY GIVE IT TO THEM ON THAT PAGE.

RED AND BL… NO THANK…

NO MORE GUNS

PUT A SHIRT ON

STOP SELLING TO MERCENARIES

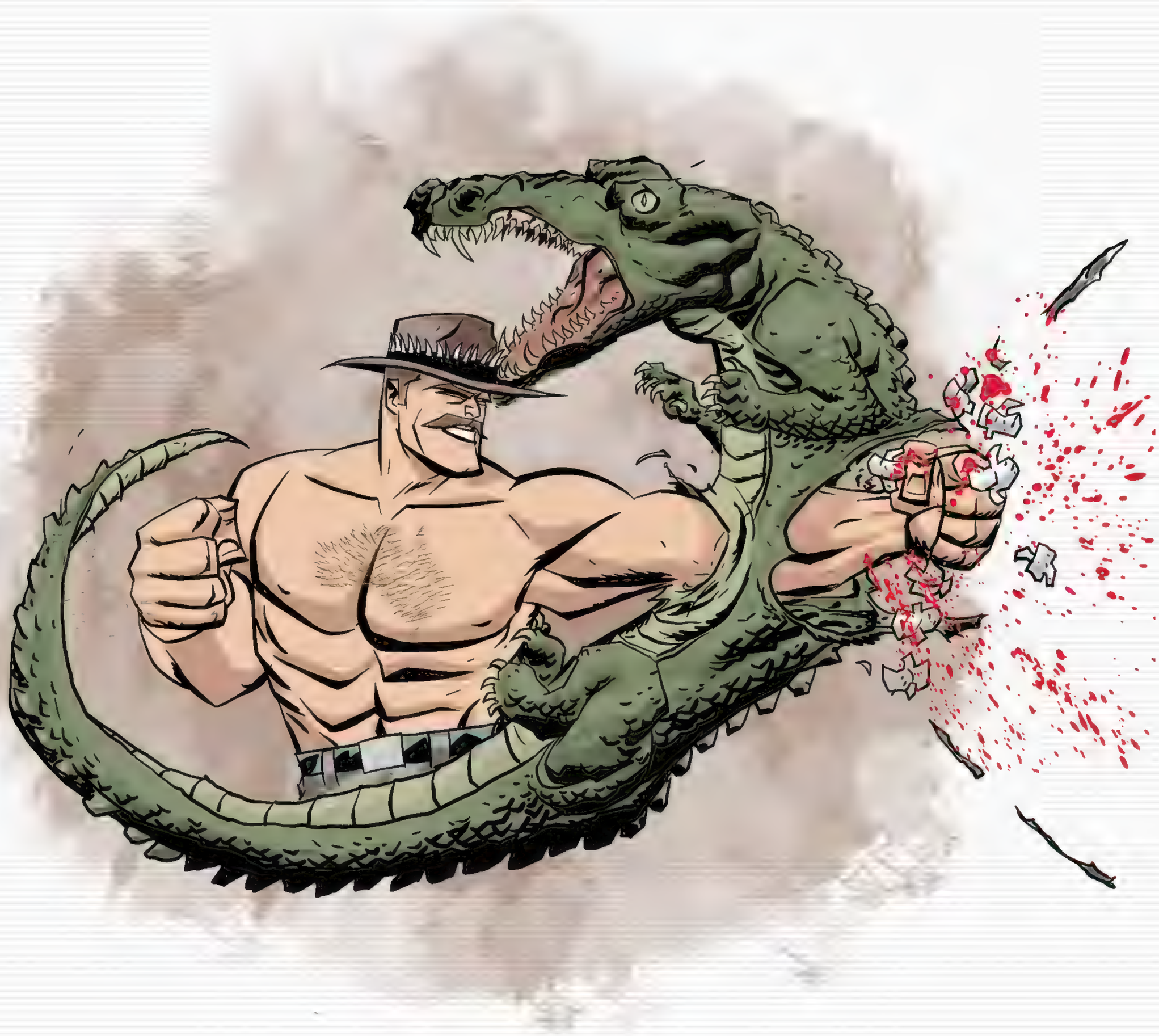
AFTER THAT THERE'S SEVERAL BORING PAGES INVOLVING THE POLICE. YOU CAN SKIP THOSE.

SAY NO TO MOUSTACHES

I'D SKIP THE WHOLE REST OF THE ISSUE, ACTUALLY. I'M LOOKING THROUGH IT NOW, AND MOST OF IT INVOLVES LITIGATION.

OH! BUT IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE I PUNCH A TIGER! BUY THAT ISSUE. I'M LEAFING THROUGH IT NOW AND IT'S EASILY TWICE AS GOOD AS THE COMIC YOU JUST BOUGHT. I DON'T WANT TO SPOIL PAGE 18 FOR YOU, BUT I SUPLEX A BUSINESS RIVAL THROUGH A TABLE.

THIS FIGHT CONTINUES FOR SIX PAGES!



MODEST SUSPENSE FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

MANN CO.

12¢ | #4 DEC

SAXTON HALE'S MILDLY THRILLING TALES

"A PUCK STOLEN... THEN RETRIEVED!"
WITH THE MOST PULSE-EVENING
UNSURPRISING ENDING
YOU'LL EVER READ!

THAT TURTLE'S GETTING AWAY WITH OUR *SPARE PUCK!*

AND HE'S GOT A *THIRTY MINUTE* HEAD START!

I'M TIRED!

Shuttle Score
70
60
20
10
0

MEET THE DIRECTOR

FOOM
RATTA TATTA TATTA TATTA
CH-CHOOOM
BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM
PAK PAK
BLAM BLAM BLAM
WELL, LET'S GET TO WORK.
YOU COMIN', FANCY PANTS?
YOU HAVE A *DISEASE*, MISTER MUNDY.
DON'T ASK ME TO ENABLE IT.
I'LL WAIT IN THE *VAN*.
SIGH
RIGHT.
REMIND ME WHY WE'VE GOT TO TALK TO THIS HALF-WIT AGAIN.
IN A WORD: P.R.
THE ADMINISTRATOR SEES THIS AS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE GOOD PEOPLE OF BADLANDS YOU'RE *NOT* JUST ARMED PSYCHOPATHS BLOWING UP ALL THEIR LANDMARKS ON A DAILY BASIS.

I SEE THIS AS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY, MISS PAULING, TO SPY ON THE ARMED PSYCHOPATHS WE'RE PAYING TO ***BLOW EACH OTHER UP*** ON A DAILY BASIS.

THIS ***DIRECTOR'S*** THE PERFECT DUPE.

HE'S TOO STUPID TO DIVINE OUR REASONS FOR COMMISSIONING HIM.

TOO ARROGANT TO ***LISTEN*** TO ANYTHING OUR MERCS ARE ACTUALLY ***TELLING*** HIM.

AND HE RECORDS ***EVERYTHING.***

IS ALL OF THIS SURVEILLANCE ***NECESSARY?***

MOST OF THESE MEN'S IQS ARE ***SUB-NORMAL...***

PLUTONIUM ISN'T ***SMART,*** MISS PAULING.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT WON'T ***KILL*** YOU IF YOU DON'T KEEP TABS ON WHERE IT IS AND WHAT IT'S DOING AT ALL TIMES.

I WAS GIVEN YOUR FILE.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD.

YOUR FATHER WAS A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY.

WHEN HE WAS KILLED, YOU, YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR SISTERS WERE DEPORTED TO A NORTH SIBERIAN GULAG.

PAINT ME THE PICTURE.

NO.

THIS IS MY GUN.

I LIKE TO SHOOT THIS GUN.

IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.

YOUR FAMILY ONLY LIVED IN THAT GULAG FOR THREE MONTHS.

IN DECEMBER 1941 IT BURNED TO THE GROUND.

ALL OF THE PRISONERS HAD ESCAPED.

TORTURED TO DEATH.

ALL OF THE GUARDS HAD BEEN KILLED.

I.

LIKE.

TO SHOOT.

THIS GUN.

IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.

FINE.

TELL ME ABOUT THE GUN.

SHE WEIGHS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY KILOGRAMS AND FIRES TWO-HUNDRED-DOLLAR CUSTOM--

...MORE OF A *MENTOR* TO THE REST OF THE TEAM, YOU KNOW?

I SEE HOW THEY COULD BE DOIN' THEIR JOBS BETTER?

IT DON'T MATTER HOW BUSY I AM. I WILL DROP WHAT I'M DOIN' AND *TELL 'EM.*

AND WHY?

WE RAN OUT OF FIL/ FIVE HOURS AGO.

I'LL *TELL* YA WHY.

BECAUSE I'M A *TEAM PLAYER.*

P/OBABLY THE BE/ T TEAM PLAYER O/ TEAM

WE RAN OUT OF FILM FIVE HOURS AGO.

THAT'S OKAY, YOU CAN GO BUY SOME. I GOT TONS MORE TA SAY.

WE'LL WAIT HERE FOR YA.

MAN, WHAT A JACKASS.

SO HOW *YOU* DOIN', MISS PAULING?

HEY, YOU EVER SEEN ME WITH MY SHIRT OFF?

CUZ IT IS *AWESOME.*

NO. I DON'T THINK SUN TZU WROTE *ANY* BOOKS ABOUT PUNCHING THROUGH A MAN'S RIBCAGE.

HUH. TELL YOU WHAT I'M GOING TO DO, THEN: STOP MAKING THREATENING PHONE CALLS TO THE BOOK STORE.

COME HERE. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING A MAN OF LETTERS LIKE YOURSELF WILL APPRECIATE.

TA-DAH!

HEADS!

--EVERYONE ON THE RED TEAM, MA'AM.

OH, YES.

I THINK WE'VE GOT *MORE* THAN ENOUGH.

"DID YOU THINK WE WOULDN'T SEE WHAT WAS *REALLY* HAPPENING?"

"NOBODY ASKS A *TRAINED KILLER* QUESTIONS LIKE THAT UNLESS THEY'RE AN IDIOT..."

...OR THEY'RE *UP* TO SOMETHING.

SO NOW *WE* ARE ASKING THE QUESTIONS.

I WOULD *STRONGLY URGE* YOU TO ANSWER THEM.

SNIPER?

OH, I'VE GOT *QUESTIONS* ALRIGHT.

LIKE AIN'T IT A BIG BLOODY COINCIDENCE HOW *ONE WEEK* AFTER I TALK ABOUT ME MUM AND DAD IN AN INTERVIEW...

FNAP

SOME SOON-TO-BE-A-DEAD-MAN'S MAILIN' ME *PICTURES* OF 'EM?

I ALSO GET PICTURES IN MAIL.

OF MY HOME.

I WILL *FIND* THIS MAN.

I WILL *DESTROY* THIS MAN.

THAT'S YOUR GUN THERE?

YES.

IN A TINY BED. BESIDE *YOUR* BED.

YES.

THAT'S PRETTY EMBARRASSIN'.

YES. I MUST BUY SASCHA BETTER BED.

THAT IS NOTHING! LOOK WHAT I GOT IN THE MAIL!

I AM ALSO GOING TO DROP IT ON THE FLOOR LIKE ALL OF YOU DID!

TUNK

WHOSE... HEAD IS THAT?

MINE!

THE QUESTION IS, WHERE ARE THE OTHER SEVEN?

these are my heds

do not take my heds

FIRST OFF, GENTLEMEN, LET ME THANK YOU FOR SHOOTING *YET ANOTHER MESSENGER.*

AND WHEN YOU KILL THE MESSENGERS, THEY CAN'T RETURN THEIR *MINIATURE TELEVISIONS,* WHICH IT MAY SURPRISE YOU TO LEARN DON'T GROW NATURALLY ON THEIR CHESTS.

I HAVE TO *BUY* THEM.

SECONDLY, LET ME SOLVE YOUR LITTLE WHODUNNIT. *I* SENT YOU THOSE PHOTOS.

MY HEADS!

YES. I TOOK THE HEADS TOO.

REST ASSURED, THEY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.

NOOOOOOOOO

THE *PHOTOS,* MISTER DOE.

YOUR HEADS ARE SAFE.

I MERELY WANTED TO ILLUSTRATE THE *DANGERS* OF DISCUSSING THE TERMS OF OUR CONTRACT.

WITH *ANYONE.*

GRANTED, THIS EXAMPLE IS *ABSURD...*

BUT IMAGINE IF *I* WERE SOMEHOW FORCED TO USE THE INFORMATION *I NOW HAVE ABOUT YOU...* . *AGAINST* YOU.

IMAGINE SOME RIDICULOUS HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO WHERE WE WEREN'T THE *CLOSE PERSONAL FRIENDS* I KNOW WE ARE.

WELL.

I THINK WE'VE WASTED ENOUGH TIME WITH FANTASTICAL YARNS.

I BELIEVE WE HAVE COME TO AN *UNDERSTANDING,* GENTLEMEN.

ENJOY YOUR EVENING.

A *MINE?*

SHE WANTS TO CONDUCT HER INTERVIEW IN A *MINE?*

SHE... PREFERS THE ACOUSTICS.

I SUSPECT YOU MISUNDERSTOOD HER. LIKE YOU MISUNDERSTAND *EVERYTHING.*

GOD, YOU'RE USELESS.

WELL, LET'S GET THIS FARCE OVER WITH.

HELLO?

HELLLOOO?

RINNNNNG

KEEP WALKING! SHE'S FURTHER IN!

PAST THESE WHITE CANVAS TARPS?

OO. PERFECT. **STAND ON THOSE! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!**

PAULING.

DID IT WORK?

YEP. WALKED RIGHT IN.

GOOD. I TOLD YOU NOT TO WASTE TIME WITH AN ELABORATE BACK-STORY.

MANN CO.

OH YEAHHHH!

CORPSE-GRADE QUICKLIME

I JUST HAD A PLEASANT CHAT WITH OUR MERCENARIES.

WE SHOULD HAVE ALL THE LEVERAGE WE NEED.

SHOULD I HOLD OFF ON YOUR "INTERVIEW"?

HE NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO BLU.

NO, HE'S A LIABILITY. DO THE "INTERVIEW".

THEN GET BACK HERE AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

WE'LL NEED TO FIND SOME *NEW* DIRECTORS.

WE MAKE COMICS AND GET IN FIGHTS

MANN CO.

12¢ | #12 JULY

SAXTON HALE'S BARBERSHOP ACTION

APPROVED BY THE BARBERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

YOU-A GOTTA STAY *STILL*, MR. HALE!

CUT AROUND THE FIGHT, GIUSEPPE!

I LIKE THIS LION'S TABASCO!

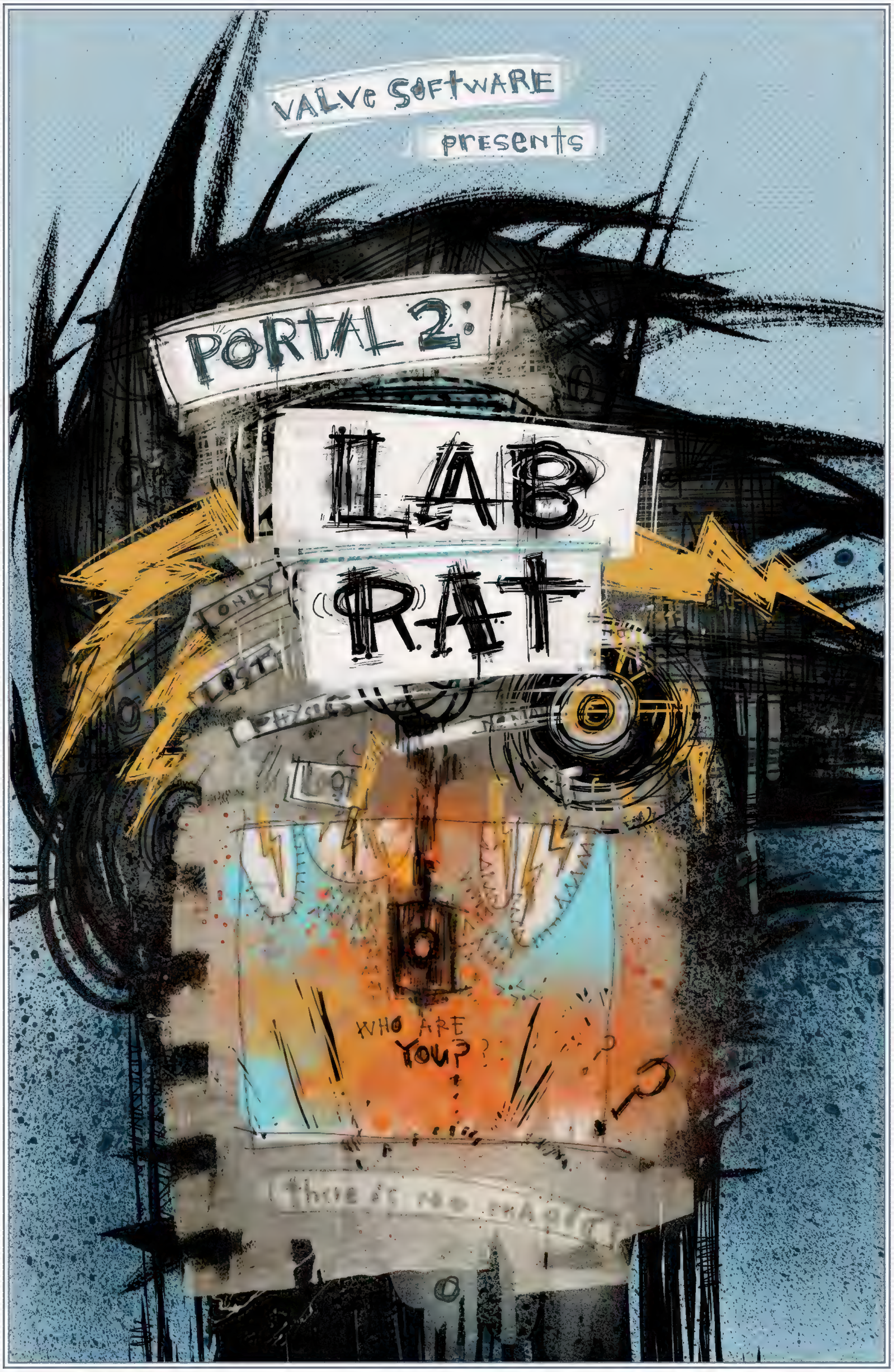
WARNING

NOT FOR SALE OUTSIDE OF BARBERSHOPS IN THE U.S.

PORTAL 2:
LAB
RAT

PORTAL 2™

LAB RAT


VALVE SOFTWARE
presents
PORTAL 2:
LAB
RAT
WHO ARE
YOU?

REALITY IS A STORY THE MIND TELLS ITSELF.

AN ARTIFICIAL STRUCTURE CONJURED INTO BEING BY THE CALCIUM-ION EXCHANGE OF A MILLION SYNAPTIC FIRINGS.

A TRUTH SO STRANGE IT CAN ONLY BE LIED INTO EXISTENCE.

AND OUR MINDS *CAN* LIE. NEVER DOUBT IT...

WHAT'S THIS? REAL, OR JUST MY LYING MIND AGAIN?

CAN SHE TRULY BE AWAKE AFTER ALL THIS TIME?

NO, JUST A FIGMENT. IF SHE WERE REAL, THE TURRETS WOULD SEE HER, TOO.

THUD

THUD

THUD

THUD

TARGET ACQUIRED.

THE END IS FINALLY UPON US.

EMPLOYEES ONLY

DO NOT OPEN

FOR THE END TIMES

DON'T DO IT!

I HAVE TO. PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND.

WE PUT CAMERAS IN THE CAMERAS.

HE'LL NEVER SUSPECT.

THE CUBE ROOT OF 2X IS IRRATIONAL IF X IS IRRATIONAL.

GENIUS!

Ziaprazidone
Antipsychotic me ion
Prescription: Doug

C'MON, YOU DON'T NEED THOSE ANYMORE. YOU'RE *FINE*.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG. I'VE BEEN SAVING THESE LAST TWO FOR THIS DAY.

I'M GOING TO NEED A CLEAR HEAD FOR WHAT IS TO COME.

THIS WILL BE THE END OF US.

gulp
gulp

THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN I CAN ALMOST SEE THE UNDERLYING GRAMMAR OF THIS PLACE.

AN IMPOSSIBILITY, SOME MAD ARCHITECT'S OPUS-- A RELIC FROM AN AGE THAT NEVER COULD HAVE BEEN.

IT'S A METASTASIZED AMALGAM OF ADD-ONS, ADDITIONS, AND APPROPRIATIONS. BUILDING ITSELF OUT OF ITSELF.

BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIBLE--

AND LIKE ANYTHING CLONED FROM A CANCER CELL, PROBABLY IMMORTAL.

REQUIRED
SAFETY GOGGLES & STEEL-TOE BOOTS
APERTURE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR EYE OR TOE DAMAGE

STAY TO THE RIGHT! TURRETS AHEAD ON YOUR LEFT.

WHATEVER YOU SAY.

ANOTHER MURAL TO MARK THE OCCASION.

WHERE IS THE GIRL NOW?

ON HER WAY INTO THE FINAL CHAMBER.

YOU MEAN WITH...*HER*?

PERSONNEL

SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CHANCE.
PERSONNEL
OH, SHE HAS MORE OF A CHANCE THAN YOU THINK.
Chell
(Surname redacted)
BOOM
AHHH!
ART THERAPY THE BENNETT WAY
EEEEE!

Essay Question 1-A :
Why should Aperture Science accept you as a research volunteer, and would anyone file a police report if you went missing?
HR Note: Subject refused to answer.

01010100 01101000 01100101 00100000
01100011 01100001 01101011 01100101
00100000 01101001 01110011 00100000
01100001 00100000 01101100 01101001
01100101 00101110

WHAT WAS THAT?

THE ROOM SHOOK ITSELF TO PIECES.

LIKE AN UNBALANCED CENTRIFUGE.

I HEARD AN EXPLOSION. WHAT COULD IT MEAN?

ARE YOU OKAY?

ONLY ONE THING IT *CAN* MEAN.

SHE DID IT.

IT'S OVER.

THE ULTIMATE SYSTEMS CRASH.

IT'S BEEN A HELL OF A MORNING. YOU MISSED ALL THE FUN.

WE HAD TO HIT THE KILL SWITCH AGAIN.

HENRY, YOU HAVE A STRANGE IDEA OF FUN.

In case of rogue AI, dial ext. 219.

HEY, WE'RE LUCKY TO BE WORKING ON THIS.

YOU'VE GOT A STRANGE IDEA OF LUCK, TOO.

THINK ABOUT IT. EVERY GENERATION GETS SOME NEW FRONTIER TO TACKLE. EINSTEIN GOT RELATIVITY. THE NASA COWBOYS GOT THE MOON. ALL THE EASY STUFF IS TAKEN.

I MEAN, TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU. WE'RE ON THE BLEEDING EDGE HERE. ARTIFICIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE NEXT FRONTIER.

BUT EVERY TIME WE TURN IT ON, IT TAKES A SIXTEENTH OF A PICOSECOND BEFORE IT TRIES TO KILL US.

LAST TIME WAS A TENTH OF A PICOSECOND. SEE, WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS.

I'M TELLING YOU, THIS IS OUR GENERATION'S MOON SHOT.

CAVE JOHNSON HERE: YOU LAB BOYS QUIT YOUR YAPPIN' AND GET BACK TO WORK.

THIS HAS BEEN A PRERECORDED MESSAGE.

I'D RATHER HAVE GONE TO THE MOON.

WHERE'S THE GIRL? SHE DIDN'T STAY TO CHECK OUT HER HANDIWORK?

SHE MUST HAVE GOTTEN OUT. PROBABLY ON THE SURFACE, SOAKING UP SOME SUN.

I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT.

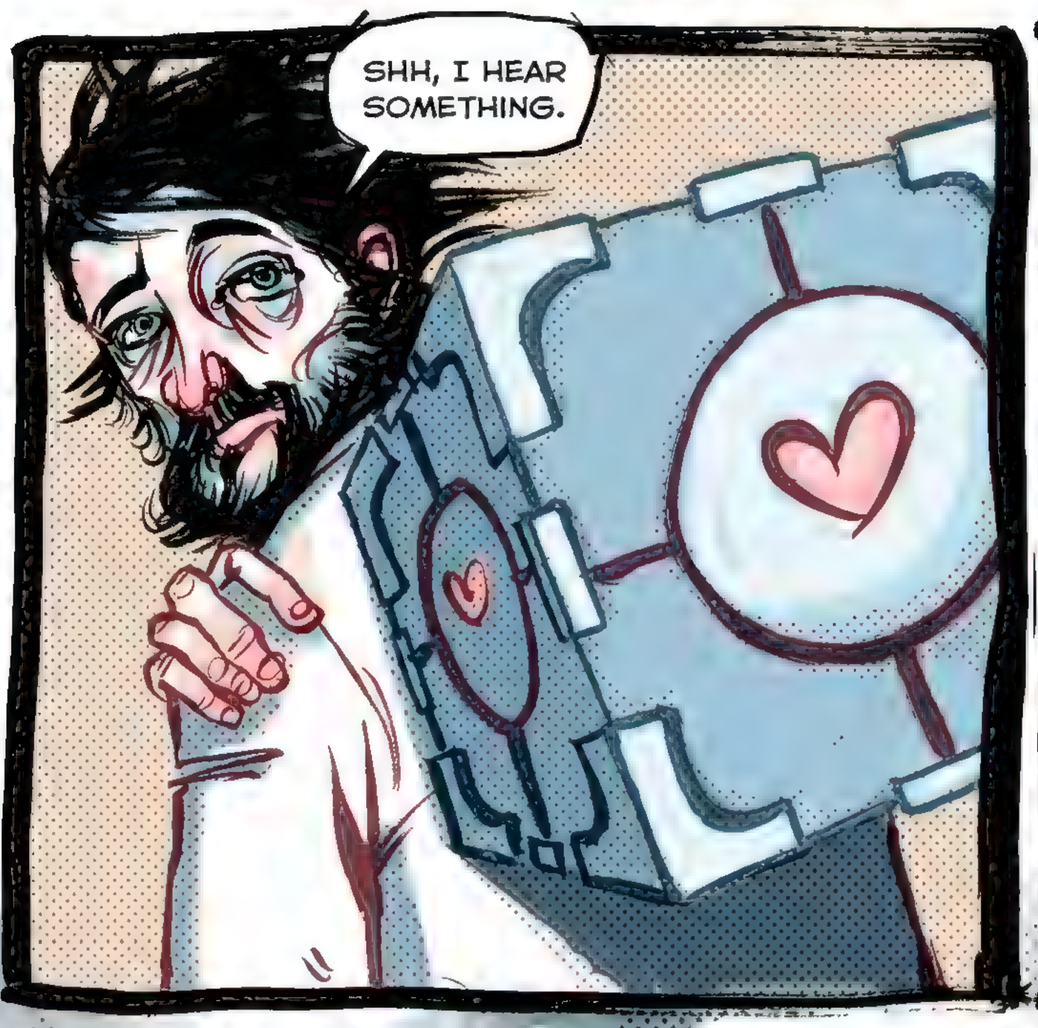
WHAT IS THIS "SUN" OF WHICH YOU SPEAK?

AND SHE HAS THE RIGHT IDEA. COME ON, WE'RE WASTING DAYLIGHT.

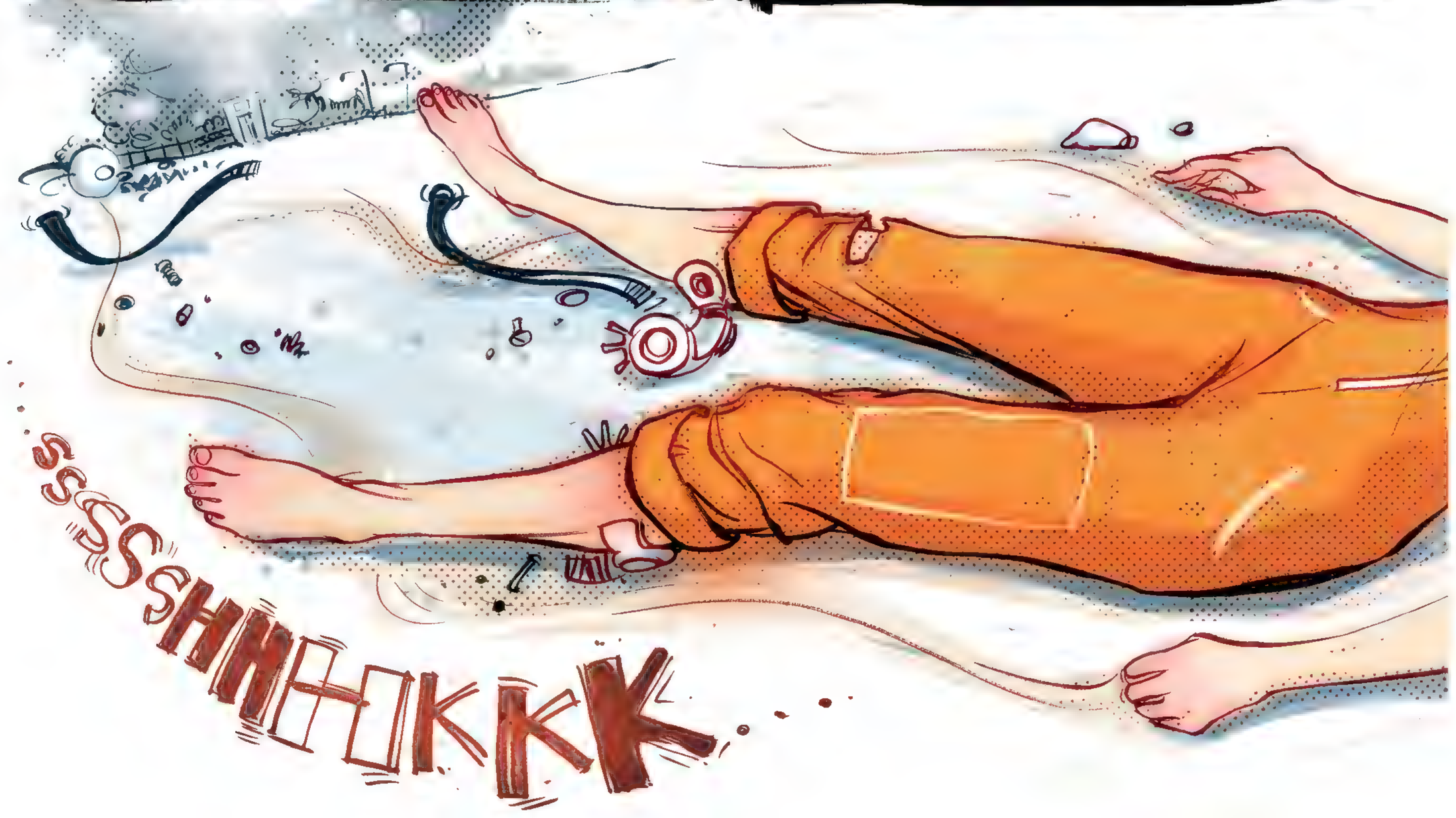
WATCH OUT FOR THE TURRETS. THE QUEEN MAY BE DEAD, BUT THIS HORNET'S NEST HAS BEEN KICKED.

EXIT

FREEDOM!
MY EYES!
MY EYES!


SHH, I HEAR SOMETHING.

QUICK, GET DOWN BEFORE IT SEES YOU!


SSSSSHHHHKKK

NO!

IT'S DRAGGING HER BACK INSIDE.

HEY, DOUG, CAN I GET A HAND HERE?

H.E.V.

UH, SURE.

JUST REACH INSIDE PAST ALL THOSE GEARS AND TURN ON THE POWER SUPPLY.

WAIT A SEC. SAFETY FIRST. ARE YOU RIGHT HANDED OR LEFT?

RIGHT.

BETTER USE YOUR LEFT THEN.

FIRST AID

WHY?

JUST IN CASE.

WHAT IS THAT THING, ANYWAY?

JUST THE LATEST IN AI INHIBITION TECHNOLOGY.

YOU CAN THINK OF IT AS A CONSCIENCE.

IF THAT'S ALL YOU USE TO CONTROL HER, IT WON'T BE ENOUGH.

WHY'S THAT?

YOU CAN ALWAYS IGNORE YOUR CONSCIENCE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO BACK IN THERE.

I CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WALKING IS TOO SLOW. RUN AWAY.

RUNNING IS WHAT I'VE *BEEN* DOING. RUNNING AND HIDING.

IT'S WHY YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.

YOU'RE NOT A HERO. HEROES DIE.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT'S MY FAULT SHE'S DOWN THERE. I'M NOT LEAVING HER.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN TRAPPED FOREVER IF NOT FOR HER.

LISTEN, IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. YOU'RE GOING TO GET KILLED.

SO BE IT. BUT I'M DONE RUNNING. I HAVE TO AT LEAST TRY TO SAVE HER.

THEN YOU REALLY ARE CRAZY.

I'M NOT FEELING SO GOOD. THOSE PILLS YOU TOOK...

I THINK THE MEDICINE IS STARTING TO WORK.

SOON YOU WON'T NEED ME ANYMORE.

I'LL ALWAYS NEED YOU.

I DON'T THINK YOU WILL.

LEGALITY

TEST SUBJECTS WHO FAIL TO WAKE FRO LONG-TE CRYO-SU ARE DET TO HA DEAD

NO.

THE CRYO-SUSPENSION PROCESS IS BOTH SAFE & FUN!

THEY'VE ALREADY PUT HER IN LONG-TERM RELAXATION!

I NEED TO GET UP TO CRYOCONTROL, BUT TURRETS BLOCK THE WAY.

HER CRYOCHAMBER...

SOMETHING'S WRONG.

LIFE SUPPORT HAS BEEN COMPROMISED. THE EXPLOSION BLEW THE MAIN GRID. HER CHAMBER IS OFFLINE.

ALL THE CRYOCHAMBERS ARE OFFLINE!

I'M ONLY GONNA GET ONE CHANCE.

I HAVE TO CROSS THE ROOM...

...GET PAST THE TURRETS...

...JUMP THE RAIL...

...THEN DIVE LEFT OR RIGHT TO AVOID BEING SHOT.

OKAY, DO I DIVE LEFT OR RIGHT?

HELLO?

YOU STILL BACK THERE?

LEFT OR RIGHT? DON'T MAKE ME GUESS!

I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

WELL, READY OR NOT...

FLING

MUST.

STAY.

CONSCIOUS.

THE ENRICHMENT CENTER WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE A NEW EMPLOYEE INITIATIVE OF FORCED VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.

IF ANY APERTURE SCIENCE EMPLOYEE WOULD LIKE TO OPT OUT OF THIS NEW VOLUNTARY TESTING PROGRAM, PLEASE REMEMBER, SCIENCE RHYMES WITH COMPLIANCE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT DOESN'T RHYME WITH COMPLIANCE?

NEUROTOXIN.

DUE TO HIGH MORTALITY RATES, YOU MAY BE RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW INITIATIVE.

THE ENRICHMENT CENTER ASSURES YOU THIS IS A STRICTLY SELFISH IMPULSE ON YOUR PART, AND WHY CAN'T YOU LOVE *[INSERT COWORKER'S NAME HERE]*?

AND NOW THERE'S JUST YOU. ALL THE OTHERS ARE DEAD.

YOU'VE AVOIDED CAPTURE FOR WEEKS. WHAT MAKES YOU SO DIFFERENT?

AHH...DELUSIONS OF PERSECUTION, PATHOLOGICAL PARANOIA; IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE IN YOUR FILE. HAVE YOU REFILLED YOUR PRESCRIPTION LATELY?

BITE ME.

SCHIZOPHRENIA IS A CULTURALLY BOUND PHENOMENON. ITS PATTERN OF EXPRESSION IS FILTERED THROUGH THE CULTURAL SUBSTRATE IN WHICH ITS SYMPTOMS DEVELOP.

IN TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETIES, THIS MANIFESTS AS DELUSIONS OF SURVEILLANCE AND A BELIEF THAT ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS DEPLOYED AGAINST YOU, USUALLY WITH SOME VAGUE UNSEEN "OTHER" OUT TO GET YOU.

YOU'RE NOT VAGUE. YOU'RE PRETTY DAMN SPECIFIC.

IF YOU CONTINUE TO SELFISHLY EVADE ME, IT'S NOT GOING TO REFLECT WELL IN YOUR FILE.

OF COURSE! ***THE FILES!***

I CAN'T SEE YOU, BUT I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE. IS IT JUST COINCIDENCE THAT YOU'VE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA AND NOW BELIEVE A HOMICIDAL COMPUTER IS OUT TO GET YOU?

COME ON, HOW LIKELY IS THAT?

I MEAN, REALLY, YOU'RE A SCIENTIST.

WHAT IS MORE LIKELY: THAT YOU'RE BEING CHASED BY A HOMICIDAL COMPUTER, OR THAT THIS IS ALL JUST THE PARANOID DELUSION OF AN UNSTABLE MIND?

WHY NOT COME OUT OF THERE, AND YOU'LL SEE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

I'D ASK YOU TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX ON THIS, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS YOUR BOX IS BROKEN. AND HAS SCHIZOPHRENIA.

SPEAKING OF BOXES...

WHY ARE YOU IN THE FILE ROOM ANYWAY? WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY BE DOING?

YES! THIS IS THE ONE!

DO YOU KNOW THAT THOUGHT EXPERIMENT WITH THE CAT IN THE BOX WITH THE POISON? THEORY REQUIRES THE CAT BE BOTH ALIVE AND DEAD UNTIL OBSERVED.

WELL, I ACTUALLY PERFORMED THE EXPERIMENT. DOZENS OF TIMES. THE BAD NEWS IS THAT REALITY DOESN'T EXIST. THE GOOD NEWS IS WE HAVE A NEW CAT GRAVEYARD.

IN THE EVENT YOU DON'T SURVIVE THE TESTING PROCESS, DNA MAY BE HARVESTED FROM YOUR BODY--WITH YOUR CONSENT--AND USED TO CREATE CLONES IN THE FURTHERANCE OF SCIENCE. FAILURE TO SURVIVE THE TESTING PROCESS SHALL BE VIEWED AS GRANTING CONSENT.

ALSO, CLONES DON'T HAVE SOULS. JUST SO YOU KNOW.

LIKE TWINS.

IT HAS TO BE HER.

1490	Phil	Konig
1491	Christopher M.	Pham
1492	Arsenio	Navarro
1493	William D.	Kent
1494	Al	Anderson
1495	Emily	Naransky
1496	David C.	Self
1497	Doug	Hopper
1498	Chell	[Redacted]
1499	Marc	Meaux
1500	Brenda	Bogenschutz
1501	James	Murray

1496	David C.	S
1497	Doug	H
1498	Chell	[R
1499	Marc	M
1500	Brenda	B
1501	James	M

	Chell [R

	A	
1	Chell	[Reda
2	S. J.	Nye
3	Lazarus	Grey
4	Leve	Rage
5	Robert C.	Knoll

Test Subject Order Modified

SAVING FILE 88%

SINCE THE INSTALLATION OF MY NEW MORALITY CORE, I'VE LOST ALL INTEREST IN KILLING. NOW I ONLY CRAVE SCIENCE.

I'M PLEASED TO HEAR THAT.

I FIND MYSELF DRAWN TO THE STUDY OF CONSCIOUSNESS. THERE'S AN EXPERIMENT I'D LIKE TO PERFORM DURING "*BRING YOUR CAT TO WORK DAY.*"

WONDERFUL!

I'LL HAVE THE BOX AND THE CATS. NOW I JUST NEED ONE MORE THING.

WHAT'S THAT?

...A LITTLE NEUROTOXIN.

WELL, AS LONG AS IT'S FOR SCIENCE.

HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN OUT?

LONG ENOUGH.

YOU'RE BACK.

I NEVER LEFT YOU.

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO ASK.

HOW DID YOU KNOW-- ABOUT THE GIRL?

KNOW WHAT?

THAT SHE WAS THE ONE.

SOMETHING IN HER FILE.

SHE HAD THE HIGHEST IQ?

NO, SOME WERE HIGHER.

THEN SHE WAS THE FASTEST? THE MOST ATHLETIC?

NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT.

THEN WHAT?

A HUNCH.

YOU MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO SAVE HER.

WHAT?

HOW? I CAN'T GET TO HER CRYOCHAMBER.

YOU CAN'T FREE HER, BUT YOU MIGHT SAVE HER.

YOU CAN PATCH HER CRYOUNIT INTO THE RESERVE GRID.

YOU CAN RESET THE FUSES AND RESTART HER LIFE SUPPORT.

IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE ALREADY.

BUT EVEN IF IT WORKS, THERE WILL BE NO WAKE-UP DATE.

SHE'LL BE IN THERE INDEFINITELY.

SO IT'S THE LONG SLEEP...

...OR THE LONG SLEEP.

AND I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE.

FORGIVE ME.

WOOOSHH

IT WORKED!

SLEEP WELL.

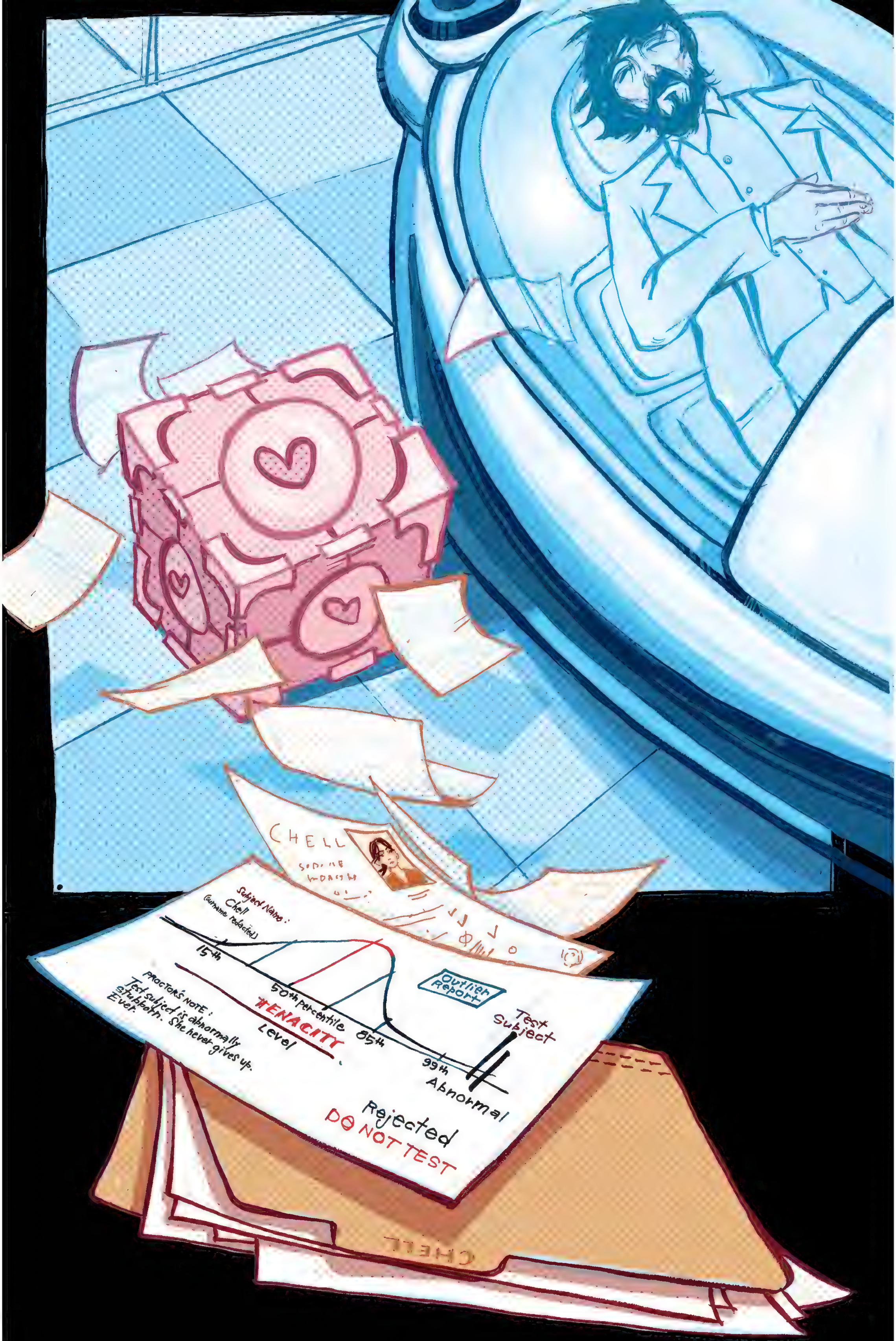
BOTH ALIVE AND DEAD, UNTIL SOMEONE OPENS THE BOX.

MAYBE IT'S TIME I SLEPT, TOO.

I'M SO TIRED NOW.

YOU'VE EARNED A REST.

YOU SEE, I TOLD YOU I WOULD ALWAYS NEED YOU.


CHELL
Subject Name:
Chell
(surname redacted)
15th
50th percentile
85th
99th
Abnormal
PROCTOR'S NOTE:
Test subject is abnormally stubborn. She never gives up. Ever.
TENACITY
Level
Outlier Report
Test Subject
Rejected
DO NOT TEST

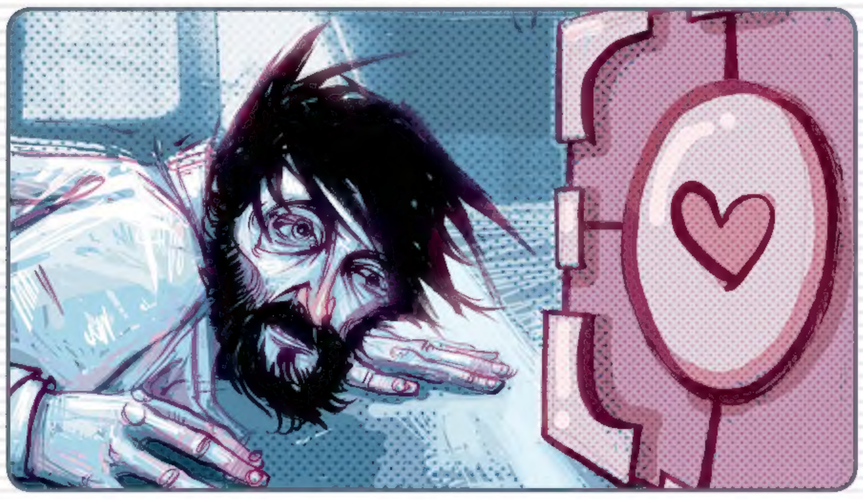
NO!
No!

VALVE

PRESENTS

THE SACRIFICE

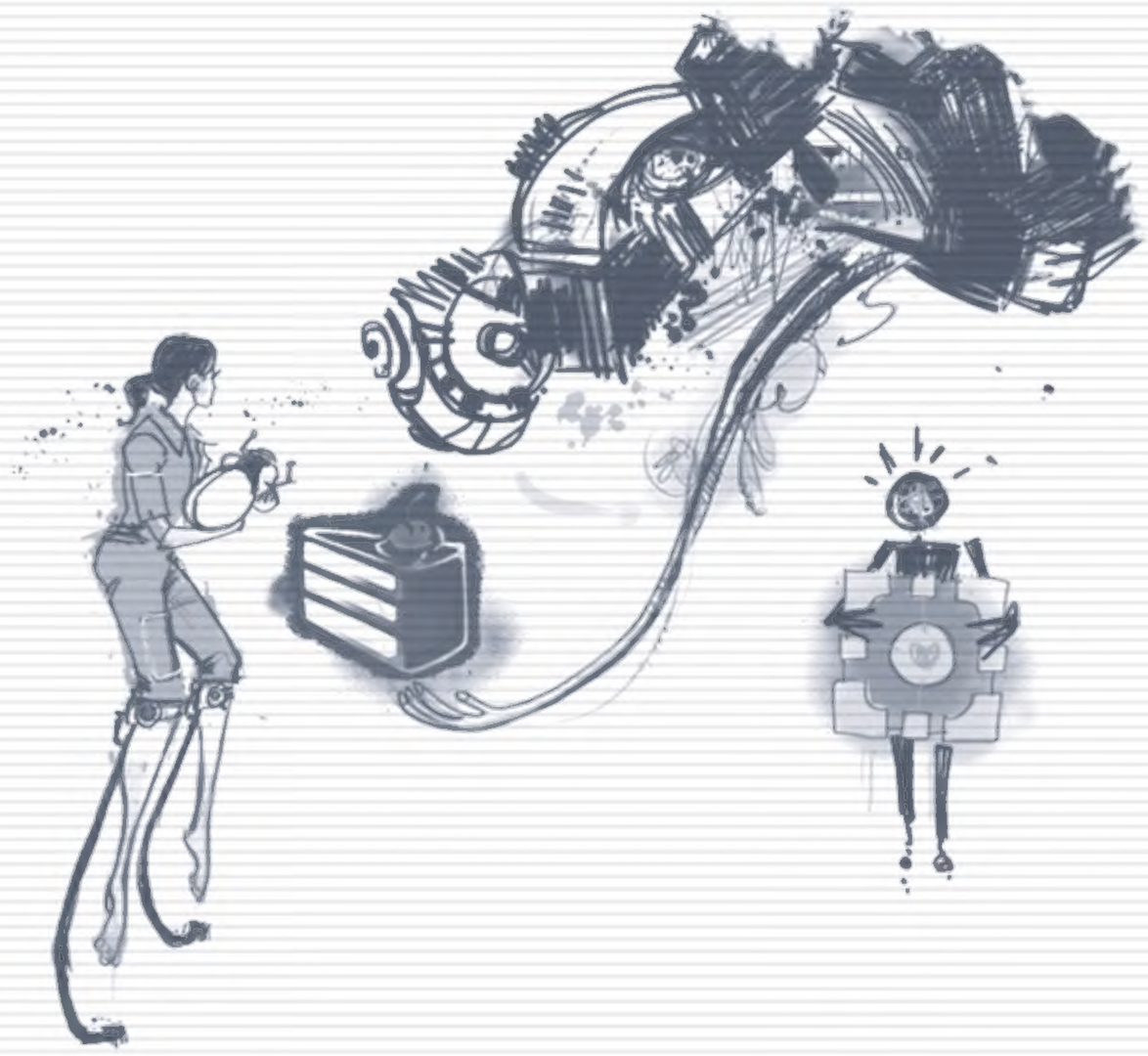
AND OTHER STEAM-POWERED STORIES



For the last fifteen years, Valve has made a name for itself with groundbreaking video games like *Half-Life*, *Portal*, and *Team Fortress*. Now, the legendary studio teams up with Dark Horse to take on a whole new medium, with a collection of comics from the worlds of three critically acclaimed, fan-favorite series: *Left 4 Dead*, *Team Fortress 2*, and *Portal 2*.

From the undead apocalypse of *Left 4 Dead: The Sacrifice*, to the tongue-in-cheek adventure yarns of *Team Fortress 2*, to the science-fiction dystopia of *Portal 2: Lab Rat*, *Valve Presents: The Sacrifice and Other Steam-Powered Stories* is a must-read for Valve fans and newcomers alike!

"Comics are a unique part of the entertainment we create. For us as creators, this collection reminds us of how powerful comics can be to depict characters, define worlds, and tell stories. For fans of *Left 4 Dead*, *Portal*, or *Team Fortress*, this collection of every comic we have made so far should address the demand that we put them all in print." **-Gabe Newell, President of Valve**



DARK HORSE BOOKS

DarkHorse.com

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"